
Politics of Human Network in African Conflicts

Kamajor/the CDF in Sierra Leone

Hideyuki Okano



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Politics of Human Network in African Conflicts: *Kamajor/the CDF in Sierra Leone*

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Table of Contents

List of Figures & Photographs	vii
Acknowledgements in the English Edition.....	ix
Preface	xiii
Explanatory Notes for the Text from the Author	xix
A Note on the Translation	xxi
List of Abbreviations	xxiii

Introduction:

An Interdisciplinary Examination of the

Sierra Leone Civil War..... 1

1. Locating the Issues1
2. Outlining the Academic Context I:
 Examining the Sierra Leone Civil
 War as an Area Study.....3
3. Outlining the Academic Context II:
 Examining the Civil War from the
 Perspectives of Political Science.....5
 and Cultural and Social Anthropology
4. Thesis Statement9

Chapter 1

An Outline of the Sierra Leone

Civil War and the Kamajor/CDF 11

1. Sierra Leone and the Mende People11
2. Defining the Kamajors and CDF23
3. The Course of the Sierra Leone Civil War.....26
4. The Characteristics of the Kamajors38
5. The Characteristics of the CDF.....44

Chapter 2

Constructing a Hypothesis and

Establishing an Analytical Framework..... 53

1. Previous Literature on States and
 Armed Conflicts in Africa.....53
2. Hypothesis of this Book69

3. Three Analytical Perspectives	72
4. Examining the Case of Sierra Leone	74
5. Verifying the Hypothesis	77
6. Structure of the Book.....	81

Chapter 3

Research Methods.....	85
1. Outline of the Fieldwork	85
2. Interview Methodology.....	85
3. The Two Types of Oral Sources and the Descriptive Method Used	87
4. Sparrow: A Research Collaborator.....	90
5. Key Sources	92

Chapter 4

Historical Background.....	95
1. The Chiefdoms: Mobilising the Kamajors.....	95
2. The Magical Aspects of the Kamajors	108
3. Conditions in Sierra Leone Directly before its Descent into Civil War	114

Chapter 5

The Civil War before the Formation of the Kamajors: From the Momoh Administration to the First Half of the NPRC Administration (1991–1993)	119
1. The Sierra Leone Government's Response to the Rebellion	119
2. The Mobilisation of Liberian Refugees	122
3. The Mobilisation of Local Residents by the Sierra Leonean Army	128

Chapter 6

The Emergence of Small Networks: The Middle of the NPRC Administration (1994–1995).....	137
1. The Background to the Formation of the Hunter-Militias:	

The RUF's Guerrilla Strategy and 'Sobel'	137
2. The Formation of Hunter Militias	143
3. The Origin of Initiation Rites in the Bonthe Area	150

Chapter 7

The Unification of Multiple PC Networks:

From the Second Half of the NPRC Administration to the First Kabbah Administration (1995 to May 1997) 159

1. Cooperation among Hunter Militias Based in Different Chiefdoms	159
2. The Spread of Initiations and Proliferation of Initiators.....	163
3. The Increase of Kamajors and the Emergence of a Formalised Pattern of Mobilisation.....	173
4 The Establishment of Combat Units Led by Initiators	177
5. The Kamajors Organising across Chiefdoms.....	181

Chapter 8

The Rise of a Dominant PC Network (The Gendema Kamajors): The AFRC Administration – Period I

(May 1997 to November 1997).....	191
1. The circumstances that led to the May 25 Coup	192
2. The Kamajors Gather on the Liberian Border	203
3. ECOMOG and the Monrovia Underground	210
4. Military Activity in Gendema.....	221
5. Sparrow and the CDF Special Forces.....	227

Chapter 9

Replacing the Dominant PC Network:

The AFRC Administration – Period II (November 1997 to March 1998)..... 239

1. Samuel Hinga Norman Leaves the Gendema Kamajors	240
2. Activities in Base Zero	249
3. The Kamajors/ECOMOG Offensive and the Restoration of the Kabbah Administration.....	260

Chapter 10

The Establishment and Dismantling of the

CDF PC Network: The Second Kabbah

Administration (March 1998 to the end of the

Civil War in 2002) 275

1. The Restoration of the Kabbah Administration.....276
2. Organising the CDF278
3. The CDF internal power struggle as seen
through Sparrow's experiences297
4. Major Battles during the Second Kabbah Administration306
5. The Dismantling of the CDF:
The Elimination of the PC Network.....316

Chapter 11

People Who Lived through the Civil War:

The Life Histories of Three Kamajors 333

1. The Function of PC Networks from the
Perspective of the CDF Special Forces334
2. The Life Histories of Three Individuals.....335

Chapter 12

Conclusion: Armed Groups as Human Networks 345

1. Verifying the Hypothesis345
2. Contribution to African Conflict Studies
in Political Science.....350
3. Contribution to Cultural and
Social Anthropology.....352
4. Contribution to Research into the
Sierra Leone Civil War.....355
5. Potential Issues with This Book360
6. Future Research Goals.....361
7. Ethical Issues Raised by this Book362
8. Finally.....365

Acknowledgements in Original Version 367

References/Source Materials 391

Index..... 411

List of Figures & Photographs

Figure 0-1 Location of Sierra Leone within Africa	xxv
Figure 0-2 National map of Sierra Leone	xxv
Figure 0-3 Chiefdoms mentioned in this book.....	xxvi
Figure 1-1 Ethnic distribution of Sierra Leone.....	15
Figure 1-2 Regions where the Mende language is spoken.....	18
Figure 1-3 Placements of cities, towns and villages	22
Figure 1-4 Changes in Kamajor militia membership	48
Figure 1-5 Ethnic origin of Kamajor militias	49
Figure 1-6 Who mobilised the militias?.....	50
Figure 2-1 The patron–client network	61
Figure 2-2 Rifts in the patron–client network.....	63
Figure 2-3 Hypothesis of this study.....	71
Figure 6-1 Number of incidents of human rights violation abuses by the RUF	140
Figure 6-2 Number of incidents of human rights violation abuses by the SLA.....	143
Figure 8-1 Locations of Gendema and Zimmi.....	221
Figure 8-2 Organisational structure of the CDF Special Forces.....	233
Figure 9-1 Freetown and its surrounding areas	265
Figure 10-1 The CDF Organisation structure as presented in the <i>Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone</i> report	279
Photograph 1-1 The Bush (Waterloo, 2011. Photograph by author).....	20
Photograph 1-2 A bush path (Kailahun District, 2009. Photograph by author) ..	21
Photograph 1-3 Kamajors (From the <i>Democrat</i> , 27 February 1997)	44
Photograph 2-1 Samuel Hinga Norman (From the <i>Standard Times</i>)	79
Photograph 2-2 Allieu Kondewa (Provided by Danny Hoffman).....	79

Photograph 2-3 Moinina Fofana (From the SCSL website).....	80
Photograph 6-1 Contemporary newspaper article reporting the Massacre at Telu (From <i>Vision</i> , 14–21 July 1994).....	149
Photograph 7-1 Mama Munda and a Kamajor (Provided by Danny Hoffman).....	171
Photograph 7-2 Photograph taken during mass initiation (From the personal collection of Sheik Kabbah) .	179
Photograph 8-1 Gendema (The road leading to Liberia, 2009. Photograph by author) ..	209
Photograph 8-2 Sparrow (left), author’s research collaborator, and Eddie Massallay (right) (Taken in 2010 by author, published with permission of individuals in photograph).....	209
Photograph 8-3: The ruins of Hotel Africa. The OAU Villas are located near this position, but photography of the villas was not permitted as they were being used as military facilities. (Photograph by author, 2009)	216
Photograph 8-4: Ricks Institute. The school was reopened after the Second Liberian Civil War. (Photograph by author, 2009)	216
Photograph 9-1: Talia (Photograph by author, 2009)	246
Photograph 9-2: The school grounds that were used as a helicopter landing pad (Talia, 2009. Photograph by author).....	251
Photograph 10-1: Former Kamajor Abu Bakar Kamara speaking to Sparrow as he points at a book (Photograph by author, 2012)	316

Acknowledgements in the English Edition

This book is a translation of a Japanese text published in 2015 as *Aburika no naisen to buso seryoku: Shiera reone naisen ni miru jinmyaku nettowaku no seiseito henyo* (Africa War and Armed Group: Formation and Transformation of Human Network in the War of Sierra Leone).

The structure of this book might be unfamiliar to English-speaking scholars and students. This unfamiliarity stems from the differences in academic approaches between the English-speaking world and that of the Japanese.

Japan has its own path of academic development in African studies. One of the reasons is smallness of the academic society. The Japan Association for African Studies (JAAS) has only 900 members, and in the annual conference in 2018 only 140 papers were presented. Therefore, Africanists have to interact and discuss beyond academic disciplines. Personally, I have a lot of chances to receive advice from anthropologists as well as political scientists.

Another reason might be reaction to recent the trend of academics in English. Within a few decades, the divisions among academic disciplines became more rigid. For example, in political science, the main stream is to find a generalised explanatory model which might be applicable to any society. Elaborating academic approaches is meaningful but, on the other hand, some elements are abandoned in the process of the elaboration.

This book emphasises that social phenomena arose as the result of accumulation from the past. In order to understand social phenomena deeply, the wholistic understanding of a society is necessary, which includes social norms, faith, history, governance and livelihood. A local society has its way of life which fits in with natural environment. New ideas and institutions have flown into the society from the outer world. Inflow of new people, rules by traditional states, integrations in economic networks, colonisation and independences as nation states all have affected the local society. Therefore, even in analysing a modern political phenomenon, one needs to understand a society holistically, and have to grasp how it

has changed in the historical process. Africanists in Japan tend to emphasise such an attitude. One might criticise such attitude as immaturity of academic disciplines, but at least, I can emphasise that Japanese Africanists pay attention to social phenomena which cannot be understood with quantitative analysis which is prevalent in political science.

Africanists in Japan have published articles and books in Japanese. It is fortunate that non-European scholars can publish in their own language but, on the other hand, we missed chances to connect ourselves to African studies in English. This book is a translation of a Japanese book. Therefore, the content is not accommodated with African studies in English. Normally, writing in English is not only the problem of translation. We should understand academic styles and trends in English-speaking scholars, and have to accommodate them. Therefore, writing articles in English is always the work of accommodating with main stream of academics. This book is free from such compromise.

However, I have to say that this book is not a direct translation from the original book. I have had to write some explanations because some arguments cannot be understood without knowing Japanese common sense. There are also some elements that solely look at trends in African studies in Japan. I modified such parts.

This book can contribute in some points. First, this book is the most detailed description on Kamajor/the CDF which attempts to capture the chronological changes. Especially, this book has strength in how Kamajor/the CDF transformed in the course of the war in Sierra Leone. Second, this book includes the descriptions of the Liberian armed group, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO). The ULIMO was an armed group of neighbouring Liberia, which was established with the support from the Sierra Leone government. Only a few publications were published on the ULIMO so far, and the ULIMO is still under-researched. This book can fill the gap and provide the detailed description of how the ULIMO was organised.

I owe a lot in the publication of the English version. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Francis B. Nyamnjoh for this publication. I met him in a forum 'Conflict and Coexistence in Africa' in 2014, which was

intended for the exchange of arguments between African intellectuals and Japanese scholars. I had a chance to make a presentation there. Afterwards, I consulted with him on the publication, because I have to find a publisher for applying grants for both translation and publication. He gave me a green-light for publication with his own publisher, Langaa RPCIG. It is hard to find a publisher before translating a book. I cannot thank him enough.

Mr. Roger Prior and Mr. James Watts are great translators. They tried to capture my intentions during the translating process, and reflect them in the actual translation. They showed me their work from the parts they finished. They are native speakers in English and tried to translate into ‘natural’ English while I am careful about academic preciseness. I was rude enough to question the adequacies of the translation point by point. They sincerely responded to my questions and provided suggestions all the time. These exchanges of emails certainly made the quality of this book higher; easier to read and more precise in expression.

Lastly, I mention that this publication could not have been achieved without ‘Grant-in-Aid for Publication of Scientific Research Results’ by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

Preface

This work is a detailed look at the Kamajors/CDF during the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991–2002), and follows the group from its emergence to its eventual disbanding. That account begins in Chapter 5, and we expect the reader will find it an exciting and interesting read.

However, in order to aid in deepening the reader's understanding, it was thought wise to provide an introduction that is longer than normally found in a text such as this. That section – which continues to the end of Chapter 4 – may be considered somewhat dry to some, so readers only interested in the details surrounding the civil war in Sierra Leone are encouraged to skip ahead to Chapter 5 after reading the Prologue (which is provided after the Table of Contents).

Chapters 1 to 4 aim to confirm where this research should be placed from an academic perspective, and they cover the historical background leading up to the civil war. It goes without saying that reading this section will lead to a richer understanding of the content described in Chapter 5 and the following chapters. The section also describes the academic significance of the research conducted. Any monotony that may arise is the result of the author's own literary deficiencies, not the objective interest inherent to the content. Readers will find that it picks up in Chapter 5, so patience will be a virtue here.

Now, individuals often begin researching a subject for subjective reasons. However, in most cases, researchers put those subjective motives aside and assert just how their research contributes to the expansion of human knowledge. Naturally, this work is no exception. In order to understand a piece of research, it is important to understand what type of person the author is – to understand what motivated the individual to take up that research. This preface describes how I came to begin researching this subject.

It could be said that I am a person who is fascinated by the topic of armed conflict. I became interested in the fact that a civil war had been fought in Sierra Leone and decided to visit the country to learn more about it. This book is the result of the research I conducted.

During the 1990s, researches of civil wars were conducted by individuals who were compelled to take up the subject because their fieldsites were involved in civil wars. Later on, with the formation of the United Nations and introduction of the peace-building process, a new type of researcher emerged – researchers interested in studying the approach to ‘peace’. Many researchers in my generation are of this second type.

In contrast, I had a real interest in conflict areas rather than peace building and was interested in learning more about the events that occur in such areas. I had an interest in the tragic nature of conflict itself and wanted to learn what could lead up to such tragedies occurring. It could be said that my research has been about satisfying my intellectual interest by delving into the memories of those who have experienced the civil war. That is why I have some sense of guilt about conducting my research in a way that creates a narrative out of human misfortune.

In December 2013, the results of my research were submitted as my doctoral thesis to the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University under the title, *Jinmyaku Nettowaku toshiteno Busiseryoku: Siera reone Niasen ni okeru Kamajo/CDF no Seisei to Henyo* (Armed Forces as a Human Network: Study of the Creation and Transformation of the Kamajors/CDF during the Sierra Leone Civil War). This book is based upon that thesis, which was a discussion on the Kamajors/CDF. The Kamajors/CDF gained power over the course the Sierra Leone Civil War, and my work looks into how the group emerged, transformed and eventually disbanded.

I first began to become interested in civil war as a subject in October 2001. I was still in undergraduate school and was backpacking through Cambodia. Continuous civil war and repeated changes in government had resulted in a long period of political unrest in Cambodia, and the country was not as prosperous as it is today (While it would still be difficult to describe Cambodia as currently thriving, it has undergone some major transformations). At that time, Cambodia still had issues with maintaining public order, but it had begun to show some degree of stability, and tourists had begun to arrive. Tourists had to be careful to watch out for land mines, and robberies occasionally occurred. However, there were

already guide books being published and tourists were generally able to visit the country without any problems. I travelled to what was then Cambodia's second largest urban centre, Battambang. I found motorcycle taxi riders waiting for tourists at the hotel recommended by the guide book, and they suggested that I should charter a motorcycle for my next day of sightseeing. I asked each of the gathered riders how much a one-day charter would cost and eventually settled with the individual who offered the lowest price. I remember it as being only a few US dollars. That was how I chose my driver for the following day's sightseeing.

The next day, my driver and I toured some of the more famous areas of the town, and some of those still showed what could be called the 'scars' of the civil war. We visited the famed Killing Caves, which once served as an execution site under the rule of Pol Pot.

'Maybe my uncle is resting here', my driver quietly said. He told me that his uncle had been taken away along with his family and was missing. My driver himself became a soldier later on in the civil war and took part in military exercises. He began to speak about the mountain above the Killing Caves, pointing at a small hill and saying, 'I did military drills at the foot of that hill'. Then he began casually speaking about his own life, which had been a difficult one, and I found myself engrossed in his story of hardship and misfortune. It was the first time I'd ever come face to face with civil war and with the tragedy that could be inflicted upon a people by the state. Since that point, I have been interested in civil war and states.

The reason I wanted to go on to earn my master's degree is because I wanted to study international aid – and peace building in particular. I also decided that I would aim in that direction in terms of my future career. When I came back from Cambodia, I was still an undergraduate student, and I began to study more about the civil wars that have been fought around the world. My interest was naturally drawn towards Africa, where civil war is still a part of everyday life in many places. As I continued to learn more, I was drawn to the Sierra Leone Civil War, and the uniqueness of the war. Another reason I was interested in Sierra Leone was because it was regarded as a successful case of peacekeeping operation by the United Nations.

I researched the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces and completed my master's degree, but then began to worry about where I wanted to go with my career. I interned at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and began to question whether or not international aid truly was any use to people in locally affected regions. At the very least, I saw bilateral aid only as a means of diplomacy (I understand that there will be counterarguments to this). I thought about going on to get my Ph.D. and continuing my research, but I had little confidence in my abilities. It was also difficult for me to throw away the idea of a career in development assistance, and I applied for a number of posts.

I received a phone call telling me that I had been accepted for a position at an overseas aid organisation, and I found myself at a loss. I didn't know what path I should take. However, that phone call motivated me to make a decision; I was more interested in learning about what happened in areas affected by civil war than I was in working in the field of development assistance. Rather, I felt that I would be better able to contribute to society by taking the academic path. This was how I decided to become a researcher, and I later began my studies in the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University. Some of the research I conducted there – i.e. my doctoral thesis – became the foundation of this book.

This research can be called a product of its time; certainly, the reason it exists is because of the conditions at the time of writing. When I first started my research, Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia were at peace, and the reconciliation efforts had already ended. Because of that, the people who wanted to talk about their experiences were more likely to come to me and tell me what happened. Many individuals aided me in my search to find people willing to tell their stories. Some of them responded to my enquiries multiple times, saying that unless researchers like me did our work carefully, the world would only get incorrect information about what happened. I am indebted to the people who responded to my selfish interest in this way.

Finally, a warning: any misunderstandings or errors that appear in this text are the sole responsibility of myself as the author. If any

such errors are discovered, a message detailing the issue would be greatly appreciated.

Explanatory Notes for the Text from the Author

1. Sierra Leone won its independence in 1961, but when historical events that occurred before its independence are described, the name of Sierra Leone is used to refer to those lands that are now considered to be part of the country.

2. Members of the Sierra Leone armed forces are referred to herein as ‘soldiers’ while those in armed groups and militias that did not belong to the official armed forces of the country are referred to as ‘combatants’ or ‘fighters’.

3. When necessary, quotes and other statements are supplemented by additional information. They are added in [brackets] within the text.

4. Interviews were conducted in English or Krio, but fieldnotes were taken in Japanese [author’s native language]. This is because the author had no intention of publishing in English at the time of fieldwork. Quotes and statements are re-translated from Japanese to English by translators.

5. With quotes and other statements, some phrasing has been edited to clarify the meaning when necessary. For example, the author has added proper names whenever a speaker referred to an area in a vague way, such as ‘this town’, and names of individuals may have been changed to the pronoun ‘he’ (where male).

6. This book deals with the past war. Therefore, I use any relevant statistical data presented where as close as possible to 1991, which was when the civil war began.

7. The research upon which this book is based deals with themes related to human rights issues and crimes. For this reason, the names of individuals with whom interviews were conducted may have been redacted/omitted (in some cases, the location of the interview has also been omitted). Names have been used for individuals who played a major role in the civil war and for individuals who were the centre of this study. However, with regard to the latter, pseudonyms have been used in some cases.

A Note on the Translation

It is fair to say that each translation project brings with it its own unique problems. Therefore, over the course of translating this book, a number of issues arose which required their own particular solutions.

First, this is an English translation of a book written in Japanese that made use of mainly English and Krio primary sources (translated into Japanese) and English and Japanese secondary sources. Therefore, in some cases we were translating Japanese translations of English back into English. Wherever possible, we inserted the original English, but in some cases – in particular with primary sources – the original English was not available to us, so we had to translate the quote from its Japanese translation.

This book focuses on the Kamajors who fought in the Sierra Leone civil war, and later were incorporated in the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). Although this term is carefully defined by the author in Japanese in the original text, as the translators we also had to work out an acceptable method in English to translate this. One particular issue we faced was that Japanese does not make much of a differentiation between singular and plural, so at times we were unsure if the text was discussing multiple Kamajors or a single Kamajor. Also, the term Kamajor can refer to individuals or groups. During the early stages of the translation, we experimented with the italicised ‘kamajor’ for individuals, and ‘kamajor(s)’ for the groups, then ‘kamajor’ for individuals and ‘Kamajor(s)’ for the groups, but eventually we decided to use ‘Kamajors’ for both groups and individuals (and obviously just ‘a Kamajor’ for a single individual). We determined that is actually the simplest way of solving the issue and it is our hope that it does not cause confusion for the reader. Context generally makes it clear whether the text is referring to individual Kamajors or a group of Kamajors.

Another issue that arose was the variance in the spellings of individuals who appear in this book. An example of this is the surname ‘Massallay’, which appears in different sources variously as ‘Masalley’, ‘Massalay’, ‘Massaley’ and ‘Massallay’. We have made an

effort to adopt a single spelling, but we have left the original spelling alone when directly quoting other sources.

One other organisation that plays a key part in the civil war is the Sierra Leonean military. The armed forces of Sierra Leone are currently known as the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), but the official name has changed numerous times over the time period covered in this book. To avoid confusion, when using a proper noun to denote the official military body of Sierra Leone, we have used ‘the Sierra Leone Army’ or more frequently the abbreviation ‘SLA’.

Finally, before translating this book we met with the author to discuss potential issues and points of style. The original Japanese is characterised by relatively short, punchy sentences. Dr. Okano gave us lots of leeway to change the sentence structure to improve readability, but he did ask us to preserve the paragraphs as they were (i.e. to not blend or break up paragraphs). While remaining faithful to the original meaning in the Japanese, we have sometimes switched the sentence order to improve the way the text reads in English or added conjunctions to join sentences together.

While we have aimed at producing a clear and concise English text, all responsibility for any problems and errors in the translation lies with us.

Roger Prior
James Watt
Hashimoto,
February 2018

List of Abbreviations

AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC: All People's Congress
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
CDF: Civil Defence Forces
CMRRD: Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources,
National Reconstruction and Development
DDR: disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
ECOMOG: Economic Community of West African States
Monitoring Group
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
EO: Executive Outcomes
EREDCOM: Eastern Region Defence Committee
HDI: Human Development Index
HRW: Human Rights Watch
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ICG: International Crisis Group
ISU: Internal Security Units
JCL: Justice Coalition of Liberia
LUDF: Liberian United Defence Forces
LURD: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MRM: Movement for the Redemption of Liberian Muslims
NCC: National Coordinating Committee (of the CDF)
NCDDR: National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization,
and Reintegration
NGO: non-governmental organisation
NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC: National Provisional Ruling Council
NPWJ: No Peace Without Justice
OAU: Organisation of African Unity
OBHS: Organized Body of Hunting Societies
ODL: Organization of Displaced Liberians
RSLAF: Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Force
RUF: Revolutionary United Front
SCSL: Special Court for Sierra Leone

SLPP: Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD: Special Security Division
SSS: Special Security Service
TDF: Territorial Defence Force
TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDL: Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia
ULIMO: United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNSC: United Nations Security Council

Figure 0.1: Location of Sierra Leone within Africa

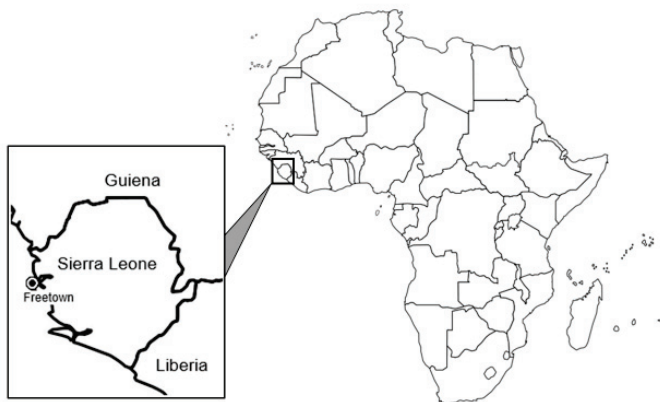


Figure 0.2: National map of Sierra Leone

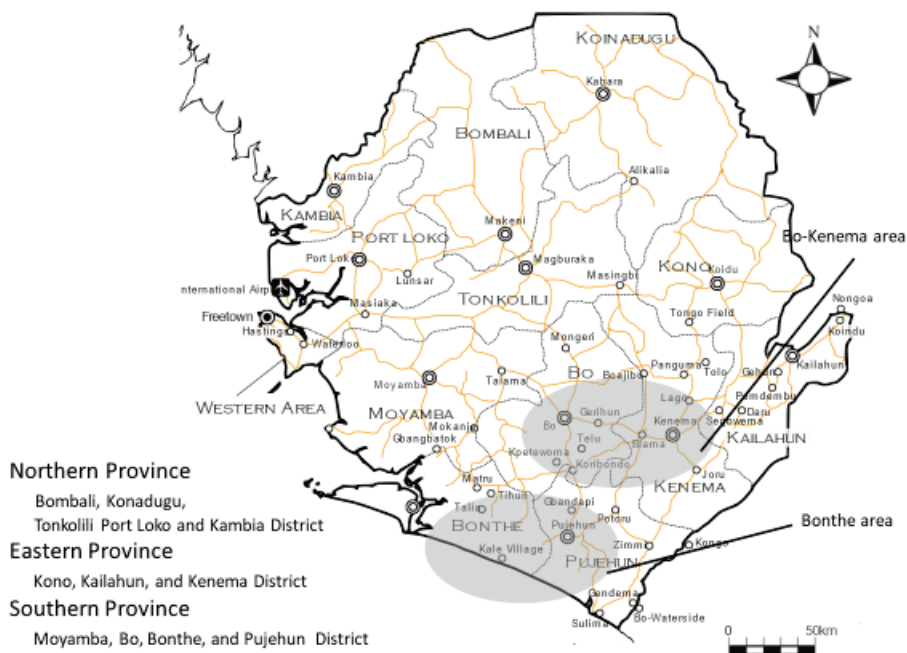
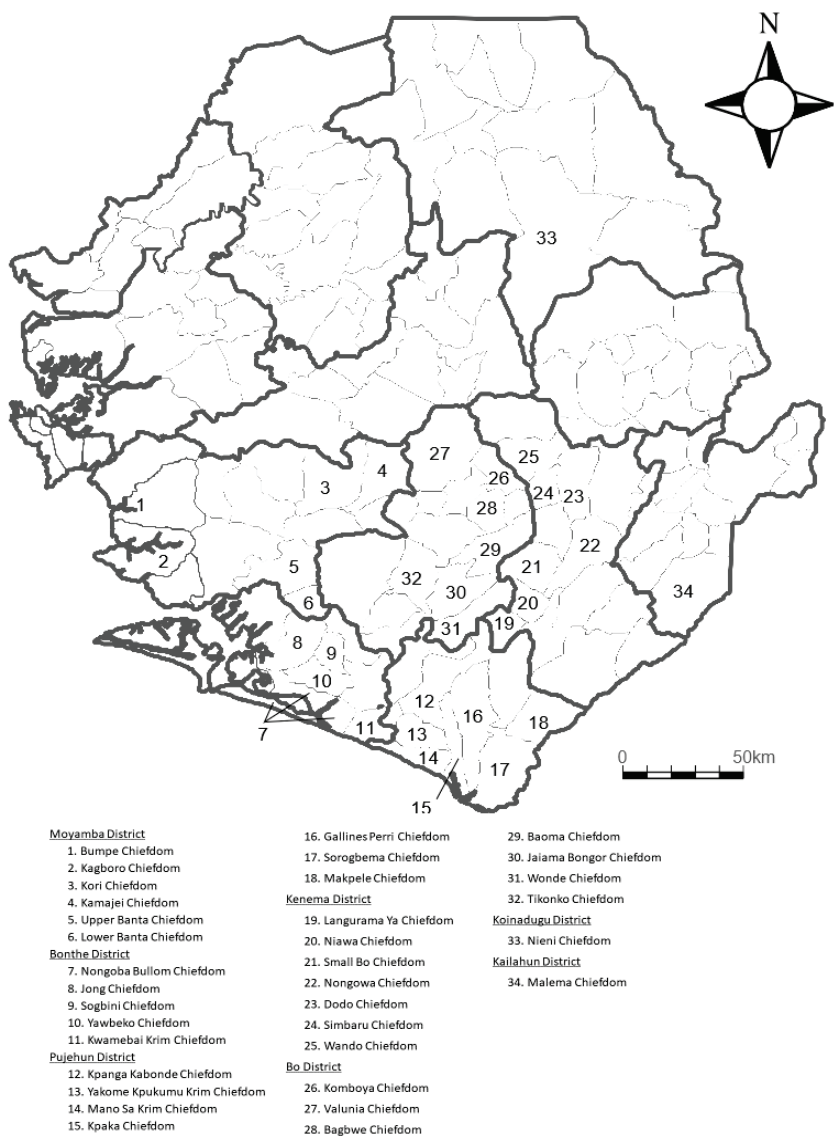


Figure 0.3: Chiefdoms mentioned in this book



An Interdisciplinary Examination of the Sierra Leone Civil War

1. Locating the Issues

The West African country of Sierra Leone endured a civil war that lasted 11 long years. It began in March 1991 when an anti-government armed group called the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) invaded Sierra Leonean territory. Somewhere in the region of 70,000 people died as a result of the conflict, and about 2,600,000 people were displaced by the fighting, either internally and ending up somewhere else within the country or externally and fleeing from Sierra Leone itself. The Sierra Leonean population at the time of the civil war was around four million people, and from that figure, we can see that over half the population was driven out from the lands they lived in (Kaldor with Vincent 2006). In January 2002, ending of the war was officially declared by the president at the time, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

The focus of the discussion in this book is the Kamajors/CDF, which was a pro-government force that emerged during the civil war. Kamajor started as vigilante organisations formed by the ethnic Mende people to counter the RUF. Local people caught up in the civil war tried to protect themselves with their own knowledge and by using existing institutions, in addition to whatever other resources were available to them (financial or otherwise, as well as personal connections). Since Kamajors were formed independently in a number of chiefdoms all over the Mende land, the term 'Kamajors' does not refer to a single organisation, but rather it is a general term for the vigilante groups that formed by the Mende people.

On the other hand, the CDF, which stands for the Civil Defence Force, is a single force that took the side of the Sierra Leonean government. The Kamajors underwent several consolidations and expansions during the civil war, although their operations were originally based around individual chiefdoms. The Sierra Leonean

government also mobilised the Kamajors and started to use them in its fight with the RUF. Over the course of this process, a pro-government force that combined vigilante groups from other ethnic groups formed with the Mende Kamajors at its heart, and this was the organisation that came to be known as the CDF. In other words, over the course of the civil war, the vigilante Kamajor groups that had emerged in various locations throughout Sierra Leone coagulated into a single pro-government force called the CDF. This book looks at how the Kamajors formed over the course of the civil war, how they integrated, expanded and came together as the CDF, and how the CDF disbanded as the conflict came to an end. First, I will describe the transformation of the Kamajors and then I will try to interpret what it signifies.

The CDF not only comprised Kamajors as it also went on to include vigilante organisations from other ethnic groups; however, the Kamajors always remained at the core. Therefore, the majority of this book is given over to describing the process by which the Kamajors organised into the CDF. Henceforth, when referring to the focus of my research, that is to say, the Kamajor and/or the CDF, I will use the term 'Kamajors/CDF'.

In order to understand the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF, I decided to trace the development of human networks. In research examining political and social phenomena in Africa, some arguments suggest that personal networks unrestricted by systems and organisations play a vital role (Takeuchi 2009; Reno 1995a, 1995b). Based on these arguments, I decided to try tracing networks of interpersonal relations in order to understand the changes to the Kamajors/CDF, a transformation that took place through the use of various networks. The transition from the Kamajors to the CDF can also be seen as a process by which several different networks were eventually merged and reformed into a single network.

2. Outlining the Academic Context I: Examining the Sierra Leone Civil War as an Area Study

During the 1990s, a number of civil wars broke out in sub-Saharan Africa (hereinafter referred to just as 'Africa'). Among them, the war in Sierra Leone is one of most academically studied wars. Perhaps the reason for this lies in its extreme brutality, one which drew the attention of scholars and led to a larger than normal body of research. The following quotation describes the view of one such academic:

In the armed conflicts occurring all over the world today, it is now common for non-combatant civilians to become the victims of various different acts of violence by the combatants, including killing, rape, arson, forced labour, threats, abduction, and plundering [...] however, it is not possible to make sense of the brutality of the violence enacted on civilians that was seen during the civil war in Sierra Leone by merely saying, 'All violence (in war) is brutal'. (Ochiai 2003a: 337, 2003b: 1)

The anti-government RUF repeatedly and relentlessly carried out acts of violence against the general public. They would attack villages, plunder money and other valuables, set fire to homes and burn live old and disabled people who were unable to resist. They also abducted thousands of children and forced them to become labourers or fighters. There was also widespread sexual violence towards women. Among all the acts of violence perpetrated by the RUF, perhaps the most notorious was amputation. Many citizens had their arms or parts of their arms – most often their hands from above the wrist – hacked off by the RUF using axes or machetes; a large number of victims¹ even lost both arms (Ochiai 2003a).

There is a considerable body of research that covers the violence witnessed during the civil war, and several interpretations have been put forward as to why it happened. However, the RUF's violence cannot easily be understood by any of the current explanations. For example, studies up to now have interpreted it as being led by political ideology, or as a strategy to achieve the RUF's goals, or

simply as being carried out to fulfil the combatants' material and sexual desires. However, the outright irrationality of the RUF's acts of brutality defies these explanations. In order to try and make sense of this incomprehensible cruelty, many scholars have tried to understand the RUF itself (Abdullah 1998; Abdullah ed. 2004; Hoffman 2004b; Keen 2005; Richards 1996), and this has helped build up the body of research on the Sierra Leone civil war. To a certain extent, the mechanism behind the conflict has been elucidated, and the debate on its causes seems to have reached a conclusion.

Nevertheless, the literature regarding the civil war is largely based around an understanding of the RUF. That is to say, our comprehension of the war is based on studies of the RUF, such as on how it was formed, or how it behaved during the course of the conflict. Of course, there is no doubt that the war could not have happened without the RUF, and thus it is only natural that there should be so much research on it.

However, it may also be pointed out that it is wrong to discuss the civil war without considering the Kamajors/CDF, as they were formed to fight against the RUF. First, in order to comprehend what happened from the outbreak of the war to its resolution, it is important to know about not only the RUF which was responsible for starting the war, but also the forces that opposed them. Indeed, by the latter stages of the fighting, the number of combatants in the CDF well exceeded those of the RUF. Looking at the number of combatants who went through the disarmament process, there were around 24,000 members of the RUF compared to approximately 37,000 from the CDF (Toki 2004: 74). Actually, the CDF, which grew to be the largest armed faction, was a source of trouble during the peace-building process.

Second, the Kamajors/CDF was in the same social, economic and political environment encompassing Sierra Leone as the RUF. Previously, efforts have been made to understand Sierra Leone's society, economy and politics by studying the RUF (Fanthorp 2001; Peters and Richards 1998; Richards 1996). However, how would these appear when seen through the lens of the Kamajors/CDF? These two questions show the significance of examining the Kamajors/CDF.

3. Outlining the Academic Context II:

Examining the Civil War from the Perspectives of Political Science and Cultural and Social Anthropology

I hope that this book not only contribute to studies of the civil war in Sierra Leone, but also that it can be of some assistance to two other major research trends.

Studies of African Conflicts Based on Political Science

One of research trends I aim to contribute is research into African conflicts in the context of political science. In the 1990s, several large-scale armed conflicts broke out across Africa. Scholars in various disciplines have since debated why they occurred and how they were maintained. In the course of this debate, researchers who were examining the conflicts from a political science standpoint searched for an explanation that could pick out commonalities from among the specific cases and have them broadly applied to all the armed conflicts on the continent. In other words, they sought a generalised explanatory model that as much as possible included the distinguishing features evident in each case, but it did not necessarily have to match perfectly with every war.

This sort of model, on one hand, is helpful to capture rough trends of ‘civil wars in Africa’. On the other hand, these explanatory models might be detrimental for understanding distinctiveness of each war. Argument should not stop at seeking more relevant explanatory models. I take a stance that the explanatory model is useful for deepening examination of specific cases, since the explanatory model contains distinguishing characteristics of every war to some extent. Comparison between the model and a specific case accentuates the uniqueness of the latter.

Obviously, there are some aspects of the Sierra Leone war that mesh with the explanatory models and some that do not. For this book, I used a model which matched up with many features of the conflict. In particular, I have paid close attention to research that discusses the role played by the human networks, that is to say networks based on interpersonal relationships. Based on an explanatory model developed by research on human networks, in this

book I will propose and then verify a hypothesis to understand the Kamajors/CDF.

Cultural and Social Anthropology

The second trend my research taps into is accounts of civil wars found in social and cultural anthropology (hereinafter referred to just as ‘anthropology’). Beginning from early efforts to describe ‘primitive’ societies, ethnography has now become a means to record aspects of the present age. The main themes of research in this field are labour mobility, tourism, ethnicity, nationalism, development, gender, problems with an ageing society, and juvenile delinquency and crime (Kurimoto 2001). Civil war is no exception. Ethnographical works concerning civil war written since the 1990s have clearly shown micro dynamics that cannot be understood through an approach based solely on political science. Although the structure of my book is that of political science, which aims at validating a hypothesis by using an analytical framework, I dare to describe micro-aspects of the war that go beyond the requirement to verify my hypothesis. This aspect of the book could perhaps be called ‘ethnography’. I intended to describe people’s behaviours, lives and thoughts as detailed as possible, while maintaining the aim to validating the hypothesis.

I did my fieldwork in post-conflict situation. I went into Sierra Leone and tried to understand the transformation that had taken place in the Kamajors/CDF by interviewing people involved. In other words, I attempted to reconstruct the past. In anthropology, there have been many ethnographical studies published that reconstructed events that took place in the past, and several of these are concerned with civil wars (Kurimoto 1996; James 2007; Peters 2006, 2011; Utas 2003). This book is one such studies.

However, where this book is different from the others is that I made the human networks the focus of my study. Conventional ethnography studies focus on a particular group or location; the downside of this is that it clearly separates the group (or location) from the outside. In many cases, the cadres in the armed factions of a civil war have contact with the outside, and the Kamajors/CDF that is the subject of this study was no exception. As the CDF was a pro-government militia, the state (the Sierra Leone government) was

closely connected with it, and many politicians also sided with the CDF. Furthermore, the CDF was influenced by the moods of the international community, in particular by Nigeria, which is a major power in West Africa. The method of establishing a certain group as the target of research is unsuitable when discussing its relationship with these so-called external actors. Therefore, in this book, I have concentrated on the networks of interpersonal relationships; in other words, rather than singling out a particular group, I have decided to discuss the organisation known as the Kamajors/CDF by narrowing down my focus to several individuals and looking at the network of contacts they maintained.

Each individual's network existed neither solely inside nor outside a group. Therefore, I believed that by following these individuals and the networks that surrounded them, I could reconstruct how the CDF connected on the national, transnational and international level. Based on the subject and method used, the descriptive portion of my research could thus be regarded as an 'ethnography of human networks'.

Bridging the Gap between Anthropology and Political Science

My intention is not in a direct contribution to particular academic disciplines, such as anthropology or political science. Rather, my consideration is to choose the best ways to understand the research subject. The result of which was that I ended up choosing to make use of both anthropology and political science. These two branches of academic study have developed the required methods for me to examine how an armed group transforms.

In the studies of civil wars, taking up the two academic disciplines is beneficial. The anthropologist Kurimoto Eisei talks about the limits of anthropology when researching civil wars. His comments can be summarised thus:

Now that 'primitive' societies have vanished, anthropologists are looking at modern societies, and as a result there is a pressing need for research into the various issues faced by the world today. One of these is armed conflicts. Since armed conflicts or wars, are mainly the matters of states, political science and international relations have been the

main disciplines to study wars. As anthropologists are concerned with describing and analysing events at a micro and local level, they do not have the language to discuss phenomena at a macro level. Therefore, anthropologists are forced to invoke methodology from political science and international relations. However, it is also possible for anthropologists to verify and correct the results of international relations and political science by taking a localized approach. (Kurimoto 2001, summarised by the author)

One of Kurimoto's claims is that anthropologists require knowledge of political science and international relations in order to understand civil wars. Certainly, these two fields of academia have traditionally undertaken research into war and by extension they have also looked into civil wars. Moreover, the states and international organisations are intimately connected with civil wars, and thus knowledge of political science and international relations is essential to understanding civil wars.

In fact, there are some anthropologists involved in the study of civil wars and humanitarian crises who are also well-versed in political science and international relations. Two examples would be the scholars who studied the famine which ravaged Darfur in the Sudan in the 1980s; David Keen and Alex de Waal used data obtained from observations gained on a micro level while researching the famine from a macro perspective (Keen, 2008[1994]; De Waal, 1989). In addition to them, there are also some who wrote papers about state and statehood in order to understand civil wars (Richards 1996; Kurimoto 2000a, 2000b; Ellis 1999). What their research revealed to us was that knowledge of both anthropology as well as of political science and international relations is essential to gaining deeper understandings of civil wars.

I applied methods from both disciplines to analyse the civil war in Sierra Leone and the Kamajors/CDF. Using the knowledge accumulated by these two areas of scholarship allowed me to tackle phenomena in a way that could not have been done using just one field. This book is an interdisciplinary study, but that does not mean that interdisciplinary research does not have an academic field it is dependent upon. Rather, it means that the knowledge required to

analyse the subject of this research is spread over several different fields of academia. As problems emerged with tools over the course of using them, I will apply feedback, in the final chapter, to the received wisdom of anthropology and political science from the perspective of one who has made use of it.

4. Thesis Statement

To understand the changes in the Kamajors/CDF, I undertook fieldwork in West Africa and pored through the existing research and documents in Japan. In the field, I mainly carried out interviews. I asked people who had been involved with the Kamajors/CDF about their personal histories and by overlaying each of those I gradually pieced together an overall view of the Kamajors/CDF.

What emerged was the image of fighters and leaders in the militia who used their networks of interpersonal relationships to survive the civil war. The figures who played major roles in the Kamajors had local, national, transnational and international networks, and they made full use of them in their operations. They relied on the networks to find a breakthrough to the situation they faced. In the process, people who previously had no connection to each other were brought together. As this process was repeated many times over, a number of networks of interpersonal relations became interlinked to form a single entity called the CDF. The person who climbed his way to the top to become the leaders of the CDF obtained the resources to manage the whole force and maintained his position by distributing those resources to the fighters who personally served him. Furthermore, in order to preserve the human network with him at its heart, he kept away people who might become a threat and tried to exclude them. Those who became fighters, on the other hand, moved across and through networks in different regions. They would change both their superior officers and the squads they belonged to in the CDF, and they were only loyal to the officer directly above them; they looked for a superior officer who could get the larger slice of the resources being distributed.

Although the CDF seems superficially to have a coherent form of a pro-government militia, there was an enormous amount of fluidity among its fighters.

An Outline of the Sierra Leone Civil War and the Kamajor/CDF

Before entering into a discussion of the Kamajor/CDF, it is important to verify some basic facts concerning Sierra Leone and the civil war. The first section of this chapter provides an outline of Sierra Leone, as well as a description of the Mende people who for the most part formed the Kamajors. The second section proposes a definition of the Kamajor and CDF based on a simple look at their salient characteristics. The third section describes how the civil war unfolded, while the fourth and fifth sections provide a more detailed discussion of both the Kamajors and CDF.

1. Sierra Leone and the Mende People

The History of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a small country located in West Africa. It faces the Atlantic Ocean, and borders Guinea and Liberia. It covers an area of about 71,000km², making it about the same size as the Republic of Ireland. Sierra Leone was formerly a British colony, but it achieved independence in 1961. The capital Freetown lies on a peninsula protruding out into the Atlantic, and the town itself appears to cling to the hills that spread over the peninsula.

It is often the case that the history of Sierra Leone is narrated from its ‘discovery’ by Europeans. In 1462, the Portuguese looked upon the hilly area around Freetown during the roars of a thunderstorm and named it ‘Sierra Lyoa (Lion Hills)’. This name later came to refer to the whole area around there and it is the origin of the name of Sierra Leone. During this time, there were many small chiefdoms in the region which has become modern day Sierra Leone. From the latter half of the 15th century, Sierra Leone became a destination for ships sailing from Europe, and in particular it became a place to procure slaves. At the time, the Europeans used to attack the coastal regions in order to capture local inhabitants who were

then sold as slaves. However, a form of trade gradually took root in which the Europeans bought slaves from the local chiefs. Sierra Leone continued to be a source of the slave trade until the mid-19th century (Akasaka 2000b).

The history of Sierra Leone as a modern state can be traced back to the settlement of 'freed slaves'. In the latter part of the 18th century, a movement to abolish slavery gained ground in certain parts of the world, and prominent in this were the abolitionists in Britain. Some of these British abolitionists promoted a project to build plantations using freed slaves as paid labourers. The location chosen for this project was Sierra Leone and potential settlers were recruited in London.

There was quite a large population of poor black people in London at the time, so many in fact that it had become a social issue. Many were fugitive slaves who had cooperated with the British forces during the American War of Independence. After America won and gained independence, these slaves were allowed to go to Britain where they became free citizens. It was from this time that black people now became a visible presence in London. It is estimated that by the end of the 18th century, there were about 5,000 black people living in London. They were frequently unable to find work and were forced into a life of poverty. Recruitment of settlers for Sierra Leone was targeted mainly at these freed slaves, but it was not limited only to them as there were also white settlers who hoped to make their fortune abroad. The project was founded by private commercial venture, and the British government had no part in it. The only thing Britain did was to give approval to the head of the undertaking who was planning to run the plantation.

Spurred by this civilian-led settlement, Freetown began to take shape. To begin with, in 1787 around 400 people sent from London settled land purchased from a king of the Temne people. Among them were more than 100 white people. However, weakened by the long voyage to the new land, one by one the first settlers fell victim to illness and disease. There were also clashes with the native inhabitants, who ended up burning down the first settlement in 1789. After four years from the founding of the colony, there were only 60 survivors left from the original settlers.

Nevertheless, there were further attempts at settlement after that by freed slaves up until 1800. Among the new settlers, there were 1,100 former slaves from Nova Scotia on Canada's east coast, where freed slaves from the United States had settled during the American Revolution, and 400 Maroons (runaway slaves) from Jamaica. In 1791, the Sierra Leone Company was established to make Sierra Leone suitable for more stable settlement and to maintain lawful trade within Africa. However, hindered by obstacles including epidemic diseases, mutiny among the colonists and conflict with the native inhabitants, the business soon deteriorated. After the failure of the company, abolitionists asked the British government to annex the settlement of Sierra Leone based on the hope that it would help in 'civilizing a considerable portion of Africa' (Schwarz 2015). Their request led to the settlement being made a British crown colony in 1808.

New settlers continued to arrive even after the area became a crown colony, but the nature of settlement took a somewhat different tack, resulting in many Africans with diverse cultural backgrounds living together. In 1807, Britain enacted the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. This law made the slave trade illegal throughout the British Empire and it led to the British government cracking down on slave trades along the African coast. The British used Freetown as a base to enforce the crackdown. Captured slave-trading vessels were sent there and their cargoes of slaves (called 'recaptives') were set free and consequently the majority of them then settled in the town (Furukawa 2008: 40). In the period from 1808 to 1864, it is estimated that 84,000 people settled in Freetown (Pham 2005: 12). The new settlers came from various parts of Africa and their cultural backgrounds were very different from that of the settlers who had arrived in the early days. Although there was severe friction and discord at first, by the 1870s the confrontational relationship between the different groups had for the most part been resolved and the Freetown residents began to see themselves as a single unified body. These settlers started to identify themselves as Krio (Ochiai 2011a: 185–187).

The term 'Krio' is said to come from the Yoruba word 'Akirio', which means 'to walk about and be satisfied'. Many of the recaptives

came from the area that is now Nigeria and they used the term 'Akirio' to refer to the freed slaves who first settled Freetown. Those of early settlers who were Christian would stroll around visiting their friends after Sunday worship, and those who had converted to Islam did likewise after prayers on Friday. Seeing them 'walking about satisfied', the recaptives started to call them 'Akirio', and this was later corrupted to just 'Krio' (Cole 2013: 18).

The area where the Krio lived was limited to the crown colony of Freetown and its environs. Beyond that inland lay a multitude of chiefdoms. The Krio made their wealth by trading both with the European merchants and the native inhabitants of the interior, and they gradually began to push further inland. With differing aims, teachers, missionaries and traders started to visit the various chiefdoms. Following in their footsteps, the colonial government also increased its influence on the chiefdoms around Freetown in the name of protecting their British subjects, and in 1896 it made the inland area that extended outside the crown colony into a protectorate. Sierra Leone as we know it today is the state founded when the area covered by both the crown colony and protectorate gained independence. (The chiefdoms and protectorate are described in more detail in Chapter 4.)

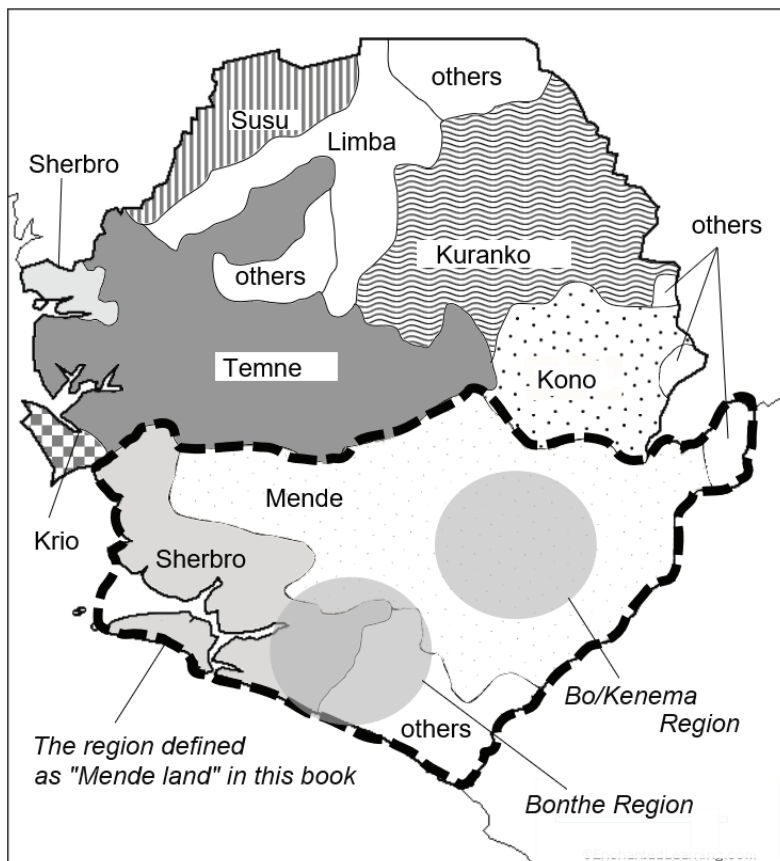
The Ethnic Groups of Sierra Leone

As can be seen from the historical background described above, the population of Sierra Leone comprises the Krio and aboriginal ethnic groups. In the present Sierra Leone, the Krio make up 2 per cent of the population, and they have continued to live mostly in and around the capital of Freetown (Akasaka 2000b). According to an estimate from 1990, a year before the civil war broke out, the total population of Sierra Leone was thought to be around four million people (United Nations 1992: 144).

Two ethnic groups make up the majority of the Sierra Leone population: the Mende, who are the focus of this study, and the Temne who live in the northern part of the country. These two groups each account for about 30 per cent of the population. Other ethnicities make up the remainder in small percentages. There are the Limba (9 per cent), the Kono (8 per cent), the Kuranko (3.7 per cent),

the Sherbro (3.4 per cent), the Susu (3.1 per cent), the Fullah (3.1 per cent), the Loko (3.0 per cent), the Mandingo (2.3 per cent), the Kissi (2.2 per cent), the Yalunka (0.7 per cent), the Krim (0.4 per cent), the Vai (0.3 per cent), the Gola (0.3 per cent), the Kroo (0.2 per cent) and the Gallinas (0.2 per cent) ('Sierra Leone' 1992). Figure 1-1 roughly shows how the various ethnic groups are distributed.²

Figure 1-1: Ethnic distribution of Sierra Leone



Krio and English in Sierra Leone

Each ethnic group has its own language, but Krio is widely used as the *lingua franca*. The Krio language is a creole³ based on English and is the mother tongue of the Krio people. The language slowly

developed over the course of the 19th century while Sierra Leone was a crown colony.

The freed slaves who were sent to Freetown from Britain spoke English. They were later supplemented by the recaptives who were brought from all over Africa to settle Sierra Leone, and these newer arrivals spoke a variety of different African languages. Due to the need for the inhabitants of Freetown to understand each other and also to promote mutual understanding with the local inhabitants, a simplified form of English began to be used by the settlers. Words and phrases from other languages spoken by the inhabitants were then added, and thus Krio was born (Oyèládé and Fashole-Luke 2008: 128–131). The Krio language did not just become the native language of the Krio people, it also came to be used as a *lingua franca* by the aboriginal inhabitants and it is said that 95 per cent of the people of Sierra Leone can now understand it (Heath 2005).

As Sierra Leone used to be a British colony, its official language is English. Because Krio is closely related to English, many Sierra Leoneans can understand English as well.⁴ English is used in the education system from primary level and it is also frequently spoken in public. For example, let me describe something I witnessed often during the course of my fieldwork. Adults would frequently call out in English to children who were on their way back from primary school. They would ask them questions like, ‘How was school today?’ or ‘What did you learn today?’, and they would make the children reply in English. They said they made a point of using English for the sake of the children’s education. In Sierra Leone, this sort of exchange between children and adults is an everyday occurrence.

There is also a significant number of people who speak English even though they cannot read it (the literacy rate in Sierra Leone is relatively low at 23.6 per cent) (‘Sierra Leone’ 1992). In what are locally referred to as ‘movie theatre’ which are no more than sheds with a television set up inside, Hollywood movies might be playing on a DVD player, or there might be a broadcast of a European football game with English commentary (they like to bet on the games). English is thus an essential part of daily life in Sierra Leone, especially in the capital. There are many who, even if they can’t speak English, can listen to it and understand it.

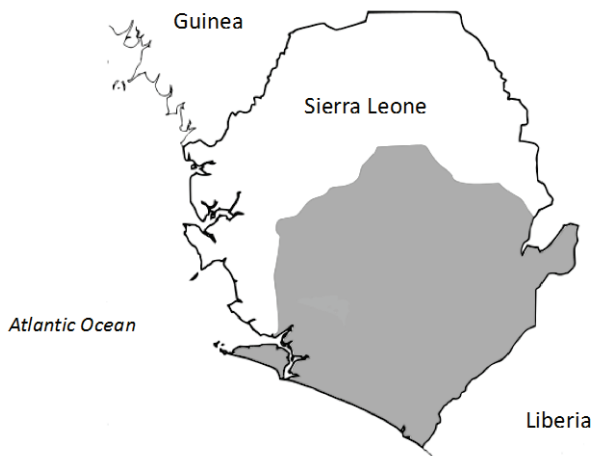
That the people can understand English means that they can absorb global trends and movements, and many can converse without difficulty with actors in the international community (such as diplomats, military personnel and UN workers). The people in Sierra Leone also frequently listen to radio broadcasts from the BBC, and during the civil war, the armed factions often made declarations via the BBC.

English was the main language I used during my fieldwork. However, my mother tongue is Japanese and I was academically trained in Japanese. In addition, at the time of the fieldwork, I had no intention to publish my work in English. Therefore, I wrote fieldnotes in Japanese (It became a source of regret when the publication in English was decided on). During my fieldwork, I was often told that my English was poor, and many people expressed surprise when they found out that I was a Ph.D candidate as my English was so poor. Over the course of my fieldwork there, I gradually picked up a certain amount of the Krio language.

The Mende People and the Mende Land

In this section, I describe in some detail the Mende people, which was the ethnic group behind the organisation the Kamajor during the civil war. The Mende comprise about 30 per cent of the population of Sierra Leone, and their population is around 1,460,000. They live in the southern and eastern parts of the country. As an ethnic group, their distribution is almost entirely limited to Sierra Leone, although there are around 20,000 Mende living in the neighbouring state of Liberia (Akasaka 2000a: 923). How the Mende are distributed in Sierra Leone can be seen in Figure 1-1, but in fact neighbouring ethnic groups have been increasingly assimilated into the Mende. Figure 1-2 shows the area where the Mende language is now spoken.⁵ Comparing Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2 shows that the distribution area of Mende speakers is wider than that of the Mende ethnic group. The reasons for this can be found in the fact that the Mende language is now being used as the *lingua franca* in eastern and southern Sierra Leone, and that the neighbouring ethnic groups are becoming increasingly more ‘Mendenised’ (Abraham 1978: 2).

Figure 1-2: Regions where the Mende language is spoken



(Source) “Mende,” (n.d.) UCLA Language Material Project [cited at 21 April, 2012]
<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=15&menu=004>

Mende people are believed to be descendants of Mane, who were originally in the Liberian hinterland. The Mende began moving into Sierra Leone slowly in the 18th century (Alie 1990: 9). The Mendenisation of surrounding ethnic groups started in the 19th century and carried on into the first half of the 20th century. It can be seen that the area of distribution for the Sherbro shown in Figure 1-1 lies within the Mende-speaking territory in Figure 1-2. The Mende had already moved into the Sherbro’s zone during the 19th century. At the end of the 19th century a European wrote in his notes that the Mende ‘have long overflowed their natural boundaries ... while a constantly advancing wave of Mende has practically inundated the land of the Sherbros’ (Vivian 1896, cited in Abraham 1978: 1–2). Furthermore, when I carried out fieldwork in predominantly Sherbro area of distribution, a Sherbro who had joined the Kamajor said to me, “The Sherbro are becoming

Mendenised, and the Sherbro language is being lost. Only the old people can speak it now’.

With this being the case, the region surrounded by the dashed line in Figure 1-1 is referred to as ‘Mende land’ in this book (meaning the land of the Mende people). In terms of the administrative districts, it includes Kailahun, Kenema, Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba and Pujehun. The centre of the Mende land is thought to be the area where the cities of Bo and Kenema are located.

The two elliptical portions in Figure 1-1 drawn with black lines are both key areas when discussing the Kamajor; I have decided to call them respectively the ‘Bo area’ and the ‘Bonthe area’.

Four Characteristics of Sierra Leone that Influenced the Nature of the Civil War

When talking about the civil war, there are four factors concerning Sierra Leone that need to be mentioned.

First are the geographical features of the country. There are large parts of the land covered with vegetation such as grass and plants that grow higher than a human being, and the people of Sierra Leone call this vegetation ‘the bush’ (Photograph 1-1). In the field of physical geography, this vegetation is referred to as ‘farming bush’. Land which used to be tropical rainforest was once cleared for agriculture by the slash-and-burn method, but since then trees have now grown back on much of it. It is sometimes called ‘oil-palm bush’ due to the fact that oil palms are frequently found growing there (Gwynne-Jones et al. 1978: 61–62). The majority of the Mende land is covered by farming bush.⁶

Photograph 1-1: The Bush



(Waterloo, 2011. Photograph by author)

Second is the scale of Sierra Leone's cities, towns and villages. They are quite different from those that might be imagined by westerners (as well as being quite different from the cities I knew as I grew up in Japan, one of the most heavily populated parts of the world). Cities, towns and villages lie dotted around the bush with large stretches of uninhabited land lying between them. For Sierra Leoneans, settlements with a population of over 10,000 people are regarded as cities. According to a survey in 1985, there were seven such cities with populations over 10,000. At the top of the list was Freetown, with a population of around 470,000 people. There was also Koidu City with 80,000, Bo City with 26,000, Kenema City with 13,000 and Makeni City with 12,000 ('Sierra Leone' 1992: 1711).

The term 'town' is used to refer to a settlement that has more than 1,000 inhabitants. There are around 160 such towns in Sierra Leone (Gwynne-Jones et al. 1978: 131). Villages typically have between 70 to 250 inhabitants, and they are normally spaced about

1.5 to 5 km apart (Olson 1996: 391). This data suggests that, with the exception of Freetown, even the cities are small enough in scale that many of the inhabitants will know each other, and rumours would spread in the blink of an eye.⁷

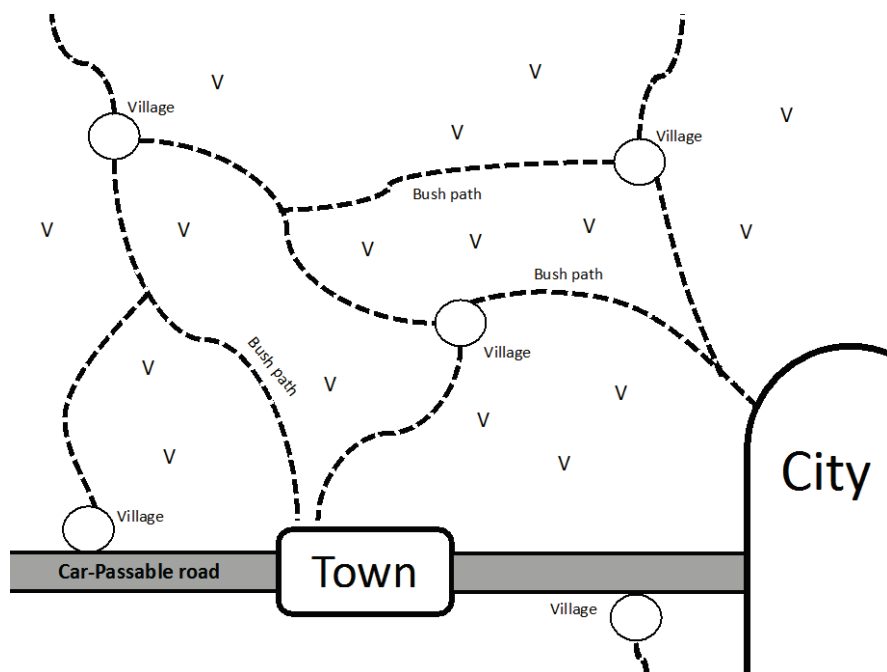
The towns and villages spread throughout the bush are linked up by narrow tracks just wide enough for people to walk along called ‘bush paths’ (Little 1967: 60). In addition to the main roads that are suitable for cars, these bush paths stretch all over Sierra Leone (Photograph 1-2). Farm land and settlements that are not on roads can be accessed by these bush paths. Figure 1-3 gives an example of how the cities, towns, and villages are distributed and connected.

Photograph 1-2: A bush path



(Kailahun District, 2009. Photograph by author)

Figure 1-3: Placements of cities, towns and villages



The third feature is that in Sierra Leone's towns and villages, the people are almost self-sufficient for their daily needs. Land for cultivation has been carved out of the bush within walking distance from each settlement by the slash-and-burn method, and the local inhabitants grow rice, cassava, yams, peanuts, maize, pineapples, coconut palms, tomatoes and chilli peppers there; they are even self-sufficient for cooking oil as they use the oil obtained from oil palm trees. In addition, they also hunt, forage and fish. As a result, even during the civil war when the bigger roads could not be used and towns and villages were mostly cut off, there were few cases where the people suffered from severe food shortages. As long as they were able to go about their daily business, the only things they were likely to run short of were salt and stock granules as these had to be bought with cash (the people of Sierra Leone almost always use stock granules in their cooking and people call them 'Maggie cubes' regardless of the brand).

The fourth and final characteristic is that the Sierra Leonean economy is heavily dependent upon diamonds.⁸ Diamonds used to

make up half of the country's total exports (Nakamura 1989). The diamond deposits of Sierra Leone follow the rivers, and the gemstones themselves are buried in the sediment on the river beds. This means that unskilled labourers are able to do the simple extraction work as all they need to do is dredge up the sediment and sieve it out while looking for diamonds (Takeuchi 2001, 2003). As diamond extraction can be done so easily with little technology, during the civil war the various factions all got involved with it in an attempt to secure the finances necessary to continue their fight.

The above background information is useful for gaining a fuller understanding of the Sierra Leone civil war.

2. Defining the Kamajors and CDF

What were the Kamajors, What was the CDF?

This book is mainly focused on a discussion of the Kamajors. The word 'Kamajor' can refer to the self-defence or vigilante organisations formed by the Mende people as well to the individual members of such organisations. Kamajors have their origin in local militias created in the Mende land during the war. There were two factors that led to the Mende forming these Kamajors; one was attacks by the anti-government Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the other was a need to protect their communities from the Sierra Leonean armed forces. Certain elements of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA)⁹ took advantage of the civil war to repeatedly loot the civilian inhabitants. The Kamajors first emerged as vigilante organisations to defend local communities from both the RUF and the SLA, and over the course of the conflict they went on to increase in strength to the extent that they were able to actively engage in several battles.

The CDF (Civil Defence Force) was a pro-government force that formed in the latter stage of the civil war (from around 1997 onwards) with the Kamajors at its core. It developed into an organisation that not made up solely of the Mende Kamajors but also incorporated the self-defence forces of other ethnic groups. However, it was formed with the Kamajor forces at its heart, and most of the CDF leaders were Kamajors as well. Other non-Kamajor self-defence groups were no more than minor players in the CDF.

It is probably therefore reasonable to understand events leading to the formation of the CDF as a process whereby multiple groups of Kamajors were integrated into one body, while at the same time that body subsumed the self-defence forces of other ethnic groups.

The Confusion of Terminology Used in Previous Studies

In previous studies, the term 'Kamajor' has generally been used to refer to three different but overlapping subjects. As these studies did not make a distinction between the three, it has not been possible to gain a sufficient chronological understanding of the transformation of the Kamajor/CDF.

First, there are cases where the Kamajors are described as Mende 'hunters' or 'traditional hunters'. In the Mende language, traditional hunters are called 'Kamajoi'.¹⁰ A Kamajoi is a highly skilled hunter with expert knowledge, and when anglicised, the word becomes 'Kamajor'.

The Kamajoi hunters are not the same as the Kamajors who were members of the self-defence groups during the civil war (however, in the majority of cases in Krio, the anglicised word 'Kamajor' is used to refer to traditional hunters in same way it is used to refer to the self-defence forces). Consequently, in this book, it is necessary to make a clear differentiation between the two. When the term 'Kamajor' or 'Kamajors' is used in this book to refer to the traditional hunters, it is written as 'hunter Kamajor(s)'. There are some earlier studies that regard the hunter Kamajors as essentially the same as the self-defence Kamajors that comprised Mende people and were active during the civil war, but this cannot be said to be an accurate description (cf. Ferme 2001: 27).

Second, there are examples where the Mende self-defence forces that were formed during the civil war are referred to as 'Kamajors'. These bodies were organised by or around individual chiefdoms, and it was the traditional hunters – in other words, hunter Kamajors – who took on the roles of leadership.

It was not just the Mende who created groups for self-defence during the conflict, as other ethnic groups also formed similar organisations, and in those too it was the traditional hunters who shouldered the leadership roles. They were able to take position of

leader in the vigilante groups because they could already use shotguns for hunting and they were familiar with the local geography. Newspapers in Sierra Leone called these self-defence groups that were led by traditional hunters 'hunter militia'. Furthermore, as the characteristics of traditional hunters varied according to which ethnic group they belonged to, the term used by each ethnic group to refer to their traditional hunters was then adopted as the name for their respective hunter militias. The Mende were no exception to this trend, so the forces they formed to defend themselves came to be called 'Kamajoi' (cf. Keen 2005: 90).

However, it is misleading to call the Mende hunter militias 'Kamajors' because the number of traditional hunters (i.e. hunter Kamajors) who led hunter militias was extremely small and most of the fighters were just regular young people who happened to live in the chiefdoms where the militias were being formed. They in fact did not call themselves Kamajoi but rather 'militia' or 'vigilantes'. The nomenclature of Kamajoi was therefore only a term used by people who were not part of the Mende hunter militias. In this book, the self-defence or vigilante forces that were led by hunter Kamajors and consisted mostly of local youths are referred to as 'hunter militias'.

Third, people serving in the hunter militias who underwent an initiation rite and entered what is called the Kamajor Society are referred to as Kamajors in some cases. In Sierra Leone, a 'society' usually means a closed organisation that has the nature of a trade group or guild, and they are part of a social system that can be observed in ethnic groups in West Africa (Majima 1997). In order to enter a society, it is necessary to undergo an initiation ritual, and knowledge relating to the society's particular craft or vocation is passed down within the organisation. Those who received the Kamajor initiation rites regarded themselves as members of the Kamajor Society and thus called themselves Kamajors. However, the Kamajor Society was in fact created by one of the hunter militia groups during the conflict, and as such it cannot be regarded as part of the traditional social system, but rather it should be seen as a product of the civil war.

It was believed that joining the Kamajor Society would give them magical powers, specifically that they would become bullet-proof and

acquire the ability to make themselves invisible. The hunter militia group that created the Kamajor Society was highly successful in the defence of the chiefdoms, and that led to the concept being widely adopted by the Mende. Within the space of a few years, receiving the initiation rites to join the Kamajor Society became established practice among the Mende hunter militias, so much so that both the militias and their members began to be generally called Kamajors. The difference between the second and third cases explained here lies in whether or not the people serving in the hunter militias underwent the initiation rites into the Kamajor Society.

When the term ‘Kamajor(s)’ is used in this book, it is done so with the meaning explained in the third case described above. Wherever it is necessary to emphasise the distinction from the hunter Kamajor, the term ‘war Kamajor’ has been used for convenience (The names ‘war Kamajor’ and ‘hunter Kamajor’ are applied by me for the sake of expediency in this book, and they are not used in Sierra Leone).¹¹

To clarify the terminology once again: first, when referring to traditional Mende hunters, the term ‘hunter Kamajor’ is used; second, when referring to Mende self-defence of vigilante organisations formed during the course of the civil war, the term ‘hunter militia’ is used; third, people from the Mende hunter militias who underwent the initiation to the Kamajor Society are herein called ‘war Kamajors’ or just ‘Kamajors’.

3. The Course of the Sierra Leone Civil War

This book provides a chronological account of the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF. Before commencing an examination of the Kamajors/CDF, it is useful to have a broad understanding of the Sierra Leone civil war as a whole. It began in 1991 and ended with an official declaration of the end of the war in 2002. To put it in simple terms, the war began because the government was unable to deal with a rebellion brought about by radical elements within the student movement, and it escalated as chaos bred chaos.

The Formation of the RUF

The formation of the anti-government RUF can be traced back to the student movement that began in the 1980s and reached its zenith in the capital Freetown during the first half of the decade. It opposed the continued single party rule of the All People's Congress (APC). Based mainly at Fourah Bay College in the University of Sierra Leone, the student movement went on to spill over from the campus into the public arena and produced some opposition activists who became prominent in the wider society. Some of these radical activists then went on to lay the foundations of the process that led to the formation of the RUF (Abdullah 1998; Abdullah and Muana 1998; Gberie 2005).

Among the movement, there were some more radical members who were not afraid to shy away from the use of armed force in order to put an end to the one-party rule of the APC. They obtained the cooperation of Libya, which at the time was trying to increase its influence in Africa by supporting various anti-government groups, and they received military training in Libya (Ibrahim 2009). In total, 35 Sierra Leoneans underwent training there. They were a mix of radical students who had been expelled from the University Sierra Leone and unemployed young people who were sympathetic to the movement's ideology. Among them was Alfred Foday Saybana Sankoh, who would later come to prominence as the leader of the RUF.

Sankoh was a former soldier who had acquired some military experience in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), and he is said to have had strong revolutionary beliefs even before the movement began. He was born in the early 1930s in a small village in Tonkolili District. In 1956, before Sierra Leone gained independence, he joined the army, which was under the control of the British colonial government.¹² After the country gained independence in 1961, the colonial military was reorganised into the RSLAF. In 1976, while working on loan at the state-run Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service, Sankoh made broadcasts praising the coup d'état led by Brigadier John Bangura. However, the coup d'état was aborted and Sankoh was arrested on suspicion of being involved in it. But he had not actually played any part in it, and the charges were

later changed to neglecting his duty by failing to report the coup even though he knew it had begun. He eventually ended up serving seven years in jail. After his release in 1978, Sankoh devoted himself to being an opposition activist and then later joined the aforementioned student movement (Okano 2011b; Godwin 1999).

Although the origins of the RUF can be said to be the radicals from the student movement who received military training in Libya, not all of them actually joined in the armed struggle of the RUF. Of the 35 who went to Libya for training, eight of them, including Sankoh, crossed the border into neighbouring Liberia which at that time was embroiled in what became known as the First Liberian Civil War (1989–96). They began to prepare for an armed uprising under the banner of an insurgent group called the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). It was also there that they gained some actual experience of war, fighting for the NPFL. As part of their activities in Liberia they also mobilised combatants in readiness for an uprising in Sierra Leone. The RUF actually began their rebellion in late March, 1991. They invaded Sierra Leone crossing the border from Liberia, which was still of course in a state of civil war.

Below is a chronological overview of how the civil war unfolded in Sierra Leone, divided up based on certain key political events.

The Momoh Administration: March 1991 to April 1992

When the RUF invaded Sierra Leone, they borrowed some combatants from the NPFL, so that the majority of the invading force was made up of Liberians. After the Liberian fighters opened up the front line and seized local villages, the Sierra Leoneans from the RUF would then follow. They brought villages under their control and mobilised the villagers as RUF fighters to increase their numerical strength (Okano 2011b). It is generally thought that the reason the NPFL provided the RUF with troops was because the NPFL's leader, Charles Taylor, was attempting to seize control of Sierra Leone's diamond production (Reno 1995a).

The Sierra Leonean government at this time did not possess sufficient troops or equipment to put down the rebellion and its military was largely just for show. The administration of Joseph Saidu Momoh (in power from 1985 to 1992) tried a number of different

measures to tackle the insurgency. Among these were requests for military aid from Guinea and Nigeria, with which Sierra Leone had entered into mutual defence agreements, a rapid troop increase in the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the arming of Liberian refugees. Meanwhile, the RUF consolidated its superiority by making use of sudden attacks, and as a result it managed to take control of a fifth of Sierra Leone's territory by around June and July in 1991, with the gains concentrated mainly in the country's south and east. However, as the Momoh administration gradually got its act together, the RUF would be forced into a retreat.

At this point, the civil war had not yet expanded beyond the border area with Liberia. The capital Freetown had not yet seen any acts of war, and there was no disruption to the citizens' daily lives there (Richards 1996: 5).

However, in April 1992, President Momoh was driven out of power by a sudden coup d'état. The period from the outbreak of the civil war to the moment when President Momoh lost power due to the coup in April 1992 is referred to in this book as the Momoh Administration period.

The NPRC Administration: April 1992 to March 1996

The coup d'état against the Momoh administration was carried out by young junior officers who had been sent to the front lines in order to quell the rebellion. On 28 April 1992, upset by the tardy delivery of supplies to the front lines and the dreadful conditions there, the young officers got on some trucks with their subordinates and drove through the night towards Freetown. There were no more than 50 of them (Wai 2012: 100). In the early hours of 29 April, a firefight broke out in the capital and the main conspirators behind the coup took over the presidential palace and the radio station. President Momoh fled with his family towards Guinea, thus bringing about an end to his rule.

The collapse of the Momoh administration meant the end of single-party rule by the APC. It brought the curtain down on over 20 years of one-party governance that had begun with the previous president, Siaka Probyn Stevens, who was in power from 1971 to 1985 (Gberie 2005: 68; Pham 2005: 89). People who held out hope

for a new beginning for Sierra Leone supported the coup. The junior officers who had implemented the coup established a military junta called the National Provisional Ruling Council, or NPRC. Captain Valentine Esegzagbo Melvine Strasser, who was the highest-ranking officer among the plotters of the coup, took up position as head of the council. He was just 25 years old.

The NPRC promised to bring about an end to the civil war. It embarked on a policy to strengthen the military and thus implemented a large-scale increase of troop numbers. At the outset of the civil war, there were only a little over 3,000 soldiers in the Sierra Leone Army, but by the end of 1993 that figure had risen to somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. Military expenditure had also jumped and vast amounts of military hardware were sent to the front line (Peters 2004: 9). The NPRC's policy soon produced results, as the RUF were forced into a further retreat. By the end of 1993, the RUF had been pushed all the way back to the Liberian border, and it seemed to be no longer operational. On the face of it, the civil war appeared to be over (Amnesty International 1995).

However, beginning in November 1994, new raids were reported. The RUF had changed its tactics and was once again active. Whereas in the past it has continuously pushed forward and expanded the area under its control, it now switched to guerrilla tactics. In other words, it would now attack towns and villages and then withdraw. These guerrilla tactics made good use of Sierra Leone's topographical features. The RUF set up a number of bases in the bush, and it was able to move small squads of no more than a few dozen fighters between them by making good use of the bush paths. Using these routes, the squads were able to manoeuvre without being seen by anyone. As a result, the RUF were able to penetrate deep into government-held territory and repeatedly attack towns and villages there before slipping away. These tactics proved a success, and in early 1995 raids were even seen in the area around Freetown (ICG 2001).

The adoption of these guerrilla tactics meant the Sierra Leoneans came to fear sudden raids by the RUF. Most of the attacks targeted not the cities where there were lots of people, but rural communities which only had a small number of inhabitants. The people formed

vigilante groups in order to start protecting themselves. Traditional hunters took on the leadership roles in these organisations and commanded the young people in the chiefdoms. As stated above, the vigilante groups were called ‘hunter militias’ in the Sierra Leonean newspapers, and they were also called by the name for traditional hunters in each ethnic group’s language. The ‘Kamajoi’ of the Mende people was one such organisation.

The Mende land experienced a particularly large number of attacks by the RUF, and this led to many hunter militias being formed by the Mende. This trend was especially prevalent in the Bo-Kenema area (Figure 1-1). At first, each of the hunter militias was formed based around an individual chiefdom, but later they began to link up with similar militias in other chiefdoms. They used the cities and camps for displaced people to form lateral connections. The hunter militias thus gradually came to be coordinated beyond individual chiefdoms and interconnect in a lateral manner.

It was around this time that the Kamajor Society was founded. Those who were initiated into the society began to call themselves ‘Kamajors’, whereas before it was founded only outsiders used the term ‘Kamajoi’ to refer to the Mende hunter militias. The members of the hunter militias did not generally call themselves Kamajors because they were not proper ‘Kamajoi’ in the sense of the traditional Mende hunters (or ‘hunter Kamajors’). The Kamajor Society, on the other hand, inducted members of the hunter militias as ‘Kamajors’ (that is to say, Kamajors fighting in the civil war, or what are termed here as war Kamajors), so those who received the initiation rites called themselves Kamajors. The Kamajor Society was initially established in the Bonthe area (see Figure 1-1) and then, after the Kamajors were successful in driving out the RUF from the area, the initiation rites began to spread across all the Mende land and, for the most part, the Mende hunter militias became Kamajors.

The relationship the Kamajors had with the Sierra Leone Army was not at all consistent. The SLA was unable to exercise central control over all its forces, and instead units across the country engaged in independent mopping-up operations against the RUF in their respective areas of operation. Out of necessity, some of these units sought local cooperation, and while there were units that

mobilised young people to fight the insurgency, there were also some that took advantage of the chaos of the civil war to attack villages in order to loot and plunder them (these troops were sarcastically labelled 'sobels', as by day they were soldiers, and rebels by night) (Gberie 2005: 82; Richards 1996: 13). Among the units of the SLA that called for local assistance were some that used the Kamajors in their operations to drive out the RUF.

In 1995, when even Freetown's suburbs sustained attacks from the RUF, the Strasser administration (the NPRC government) entered into contract with mercenary companies in order to find a solution to the problem and save itself. Of the contractors, Executive Outcomes (EO) produced perhaps the most successful results. EO was formed in 1989 mainly by veterans of the South African Defence Force 32 Battalion. Its duties included reconnaissance, surveillance of combat zones and the aerial zones above them, and the training of foot soldiers and snipers. Before taking on the work in Sierra Leone, EO had built up its reputation via its activities in Angola. It commenced operations in Sierra Leone in May 1995, and wrought enormous damage on the RUF by eavesdropping on their communications to identify their bases and then attacking them over and over again using Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters (Gberie 2005: 91-94; Ochiai 2001b: 208).

Another military coup d'état took place in January 1996 which succeeded in removing the Strasser administration. The coup established a new regime led by Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, who had been the second-in-command of the NPRC. It was called a 'coup of goodwill' because it was thought Bio initiated it to drive out Strasser after he had attempted to manipulate the transitional process to civilian rule. The democratisation process had been in the planning for more than two years before the coup took place. In November 1993, the NPRC had in fact announced a roadmap for the transition to civilian rule. However, Strasser, who was not old enough to actually stand as a candidate in Sierra Leone's presidential elections, controlled the process by which power was supposed to shift to civilian hands, and he tried to manipulate it so that he could put himself forward as a candidate. Under the constitution, candidates had to be 45 years old or more to be eligible for election, but at the

time Strasser was only 30 (Gberie 2005: 94; Hirsh 2001: 42). After the coup in January, Brigadier Bio went ahead as scheduled with the elections. They resulted with the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) coming out on top, and its candidate, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, was voted in as president (Ochiai 2001b: 208).

In this book, the period from April 1992 to March 1996, when the Kabbah administration began, is called the NPRC Administration period.

The First Kabbah Administration: March 1996 to May 1997

In this book, the period from March 1996 when Ahmad Tejan Kabbah became president to May 1997 when he went into exile as a result of a coup is referred to as the period of the First Kabbah Administration. The reason for the distinction of 'First' is that, after exile, he was later able to return and become president once again.

After taking up the presidency in March 1996, Kabbah continued to engage in peace talks with the RUF that had been initiated by Brigadier Bio, and his goal was peace through negotiation. However, Samuel Hinga Norman, who had been appointed his Deputy Minister of Defence, provided support to the Kamajors throughout the country and maintained the fight against the RUF. In October, a force comprised mainly of Kamajors took Zogoda, the main RUF base. By the latter half of 1996, the RUF had been severely weakened by this military pressure and it adopted a softer stance in the peace negotiations. It is also thought that the fall of Zogoda was a particularly hard blow for the RUF. The talks led to the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord in November between Kabbah's government and the RUF. Under the terms of this accord, the signatories agreed to an immediate end to the armed conflict, along with the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes, the disarmament of the RUF, and the formation of political party under the banner of the RUF. However, armed clashes did in fact continue after the accord was signed. The RUF were not fully committed to it, and it is suspected that their real aim was to bring about the withdrawal of EO from Sierra Leone (ICG 2001: 11).

Based on the accord, President Kabbah reduced the power of the Sierra Leone Army. He launched a reform of the SLA, which had

become bloated during the civil war, and reduced both their personnel and vested interests. This however led to deterioration in the relationship between the military and Kabbah government (Hoffman 2011a: 2). Moreover, the Kamajors, strengthened by the support they received from Hinga Norman, now began skirmishing with the SLA in various locations around the country. This in turn brought about a further decline in relations between the administration and armed forces and sparked another military coup.

The AFRC Administration: May 1997 to March 1998

The new coup took place on 25 May 1997. This day is remembered by many Sierra Leoneans simply as ‘May Twenty Five’. The coup forced out President Kabbah, who fled to neighbouring Guinea, where he formed a government-in-exile. In Freetown, on the other hand, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established, led by Major Jonny Paul Koroma, and it marked the beginning of rule by another military junta. In this book, the period from the coup d’état in May 1997 up to March 1998, when the AFRC was overthrown and President Kabbah was able to return to power, is called the AFRC Administration period.

Having seized power through a coup, the AFRC then tried to legitimise itself by bringing about an end to the civil war. With this in mind, it made an announcement via radio that preparations were in place to welcome the RUF as joint power sharers in the government. After hearing the broadcast, the RUF forces that were scattered across the country then linked up with the SLA and entered into Freetown itself.

However, this did not mean that the civil war had come to an end, only that there was a new beginning. With the international community on its side, Kabbah’s government-in-exile attempted to return to power through force while at the same time engaging in negotiations to bring about the same result. There was also strong condemnation of the May 25 coup from the UN, Commonwealth and nearby countries in West Africa. In particular, the Nigerian government feared it would have a negative effect on the peace process in Liberia, which appeared to be nearing a conclusion. It therefore sought the immediate restoration of the Kabbah

government and independently decided to carry out a military intervention in Sierra Leone. The Ghanaian and Guinean armies both then joined in that intervention, which in turn brought about a confrontation with the AFRC. In spite of the fact that these three countries had arbitrarily decided to send forces into Sierra Leone, to justify their actions they adopted the denomination 'Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group', or more simply ECOMOG. ECOMOG was the name of the peace-keeping force sent to Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States, or ECOWAS,¹³ a regional organisation comprised of several West African states. The Nigerian, Ghanaian and Guinean governments kept the same name for their operation in Sierra Leone.

While these nearby countries pressed ahead with their military intervention on the side of Kabbah's government, the Kamajors also confronted the AFRC/RUF to try and restore Kabbah to power. They were provided with support by elements in the Nigerian army that were stationed in Liberia and Sierra Leone as part of ECOMOG. During the fight with the AFRC/RUF, the Kamajors appealed for solidarity with the hunter militias of other ethnic groups based on the fact that the restoration of democracy was the will of the nation as a whole. At this point they stopped calling themselves 'Kamajors', which had strong tones of their own ethnic group (Mende), and instead adopted the appellation of 'CDF (Civil Defence Forces)' to align more with the popular cause they were now touting. In February 1998, the AFRC/RUF was routed from Freetown in a military action led by ECOMOG (the Nigerian Army). The CDF also took part in this operation.

The Second Kabbah Administration: March 1998 to February 2002

A month after ECOMOG recaptured the capital Ahamad Tejan Kabbah returned to Sierra Leone and was restored to his position as president. In this book, the period from March 1998 when the Kabbah administration was reestablished to February 2002 when an end to the civil war was declared is called the period of the Second Kabbah Administration.

As the majority of the SLA had fled with the AFRC, the Kabbah government was left with very few troops in its military. While the

armed forces were being rebuilt, ECOMOG¹⁴ and the CDF were used as a temporary replacement. They engaged in mopping-up operations against the AFRC/RUF, which had escaped in Sierra Leone's interior, and it was during this time that the concept of the CDF as 'a collective of hunter militias from every ethnic group' that the Kamajors had first proposed during the AFRC regime began to emerge as a reality. Efforts were made to mobilise other hunter militias as part of the CDF, which included supplying them with weaponry and establishing subdivisions all over the country. In other words, the CDF had now started to organise itself as a pro-government force on a national level.

In February 1999, Freetown was once again engulfed in the turmoil of war, the cause of which can be traced back to October 1998. It was during this month that the death sentence for treason was handed down to the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, who had already been taken into custody (he had been arrested in Nigeria for the illegal possession of a firearm and was then extradited to Sierra Leone after President Kabbah was reinstated). The AFRC/RUF launched a massive counterattack in order to try and rescue Sankoh. This offensive, called 'Operation No Living Things', marked a turning point for RUF and AFRC activities across the country, and they began to move towards Freetown. Eventually, on 6 January 1999, they attacked the capital and for several weeks a battle for control took place on the city streets. Although the forces loyal to Kabbah were initially inferior in number, they were able to boost their strength after ECOMOG dispatched more troops (Gbla and Ochiai 2011: 10–11). This led to the AFRC/RUF being driven out of the capital, after which they withdrew to the provinces. As this battle began on 6 January, it is remembered by the people of Freetown as 'January-Six'.

After the incident on 6 January, fighting in the civil war died down as both sides sought a resolution through negotiation and new peace talks were entered into. There were three major factors behind this change. First, the January-Six incident made the Sierra Leone government realise that there was a limit to how far it could suppress the civil war by force of arms alone. Another factor was that Nigeria, which had until then been the driving force in ECOMOG, decided

to change its policy towards Sierra Leone and withdrew its troops. Furthermore, the international community started to focus more on peace talks as the best solution to the ongoing war. It was within this context that a new treaty, the Lomé Peace Accord, was signed by President Kabbah and Foday Sankoh in July 1999.

Under this accord, the following terms were agreed upon: the immediate cessation of all hostilities; amnesty for all RUF 'combatants and collaborators', including Sankoh himself; the promotion of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR); the transformation of the RUF to a political party and seats on the Cabinet for RUF cadres; the creation of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) to carry out the integrated management of Sierra Leone's mining resources, and a position for Sankoh as chairman of said commission. As the accord stated that Sankoh would become chairman of the CMRRD while also serving as the nation's vice president, it meant that he would come to live in Freetown. In addition, the gradual withdrawal of ECOMOG was agreed upon. Up to the signing of the accord, ECOMOG had taken the side of the Kabbah administration and provided support to it, but now its duties were limited to peace keeping and maintaining domestic security from a position of neutrality. While undertaking this mission, ECOMOG pulled its troops out of Sierra Leone in stages, and eventually handed over its mission to UNAMSIL (see below), thereby completing its withdrawal.

However, even after the Lomé Accord was signed, there were some factions within the RUF that did not agree with the terms, and they continued fighting. To monitor the peace process, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established under the terms of the accord, but in May 2000, an incident occurred in which 500 UNAMSIL personnel were taken prisoners by the RUF. In response, a demonstration calling for peace was held on 8 May in front of Foday Sankoh's house in Freetown. Sankoh's bodyguards then opened fire on the demonstrators and a firefight broke out. Amidst the confusion, Sankoh vanished from his home, but he was discovered nearby on the 17th and was taken into custody. Sparked by his arrest, the RUF once again advanced on the capital from the

rural areas. However, a large-scale deployment of British forces prevented the RUF from marching into the centre of the city.

After Sankoh's arrest, the RUF was left leaderless until Issa Sesay was appointed as an interim leader a few months later on 21 August. He was a moderate, so the peace process progressed relatively smoothly while he was in charge. The situation in Sierra Leone gradually stabilised, and under the guidance of UNAMSIL there was a full-scale resumption of the DDR process. The RUF and CDF were disbanded and the Sierra Leone Army were reorganised. The civil war fighting waned and in January 2002 President Kabbah declared that the war was over, which thus brought an official end to the Sierra Leone civil war.

4. The Characteristics of the Kamajors

The Kamajors (war Kamajors) emerged during the course of this conflict and went on to transform into the CDF. In this section and the following one, I will discuss the two organisations in further detail.

The Role of the Hunter Kamajors in the Emergence of the War Kamajors

In order to trace the roots of the Kamajors (war Kamajors) in the civil war, it is necessary to have a firm understanding of the traditional hunters of the Mende known as 'Kamajoi' (referred to as 'hunter Kamajor(s)' in this book). The primary reason is that these hunter Kamajors played a central role in the hunter militia during the conflict, and also the war Kamajors were originally conceived based on the concept of the hunter Kamajors. In this section, I will outline the characteristics of the hunter Kamajors that have been elucidated in previous studies and then discuss the relationship between them and the war Kamajors.

First, I will look at the hunting techniques of the hunter Kamajors. The anthropologists Casper Fithen and Paul Richards described their methods as follows:

Craft hunter technique in the forest involves approaching and shooting an animal at as close range as possible. Cartridges are expensive, generally obtained on credit from Lebanese in return for an

agreed number of carcasses. Any hunter who blasts off on the off-chance of hitting an animal is risking very narrow profit margins. The best hunters reckon only to miss a shot or two per box of cartridges. This is a highly individualistic matter. Craft hunters stalk alone, are highly secretive, wander the forest for lengthy of periods, and invest heavily in medicine to make themselves invisible. The last thing they desire is to be followed by an excitable group of apprentices. They tackle big animals, such as bush cow or colobus monkey (and the occasional elephant). (Fithen and Richards 2005: 128)

As this description reveals, the hunter Kamajors (a) hunted alone, (b) learnt how to stalk their prey and (c) were adept at using guns. As they wandered the bush for days while hunting, they were very familiar with the narrow footpaths that traverse it. Not only that, but they were also knowledgeable about the medicinal herbs that can be found in the bush (Hoffman 2011a: 63).¹⁵

In addition to their role as huntsmen, the hunter Kamajors also had the status of warriors. Their skill and knowledge made them effective at protecting their villages. Each village was exposed to threats from wild animals, the spirits of the dead and strangers, and it was the job of the hunter Kamajors to deal with them (Abraham 1978: 10; Ferme 2001: 26). The anthropologist Mariane C. Ferme made the following observation about them:

At night, [...] hunters go out into the forest to search for prey that remains in hiding during the day. But this is an especially dangerous time for hunters, too, because witches and other transmuting creatures also frequent the night. For hunters as well as warriors, survival depends on their own power of dissimulation (the need to make themselves invisible in the surrounding landscape), as well as on their ability to identify the traces left behind by prey or enemy and to recognize the guises in which they conceal themselves. The circumstances under which some shape-shifters change in and out of animal form are linked to local history, which in turn is embedded in the landscape and its ruins [...]. They also acquire protective powers against harmful attacks on their own lives through medicines and amulets.

Having acquired such knowledge and abilities like those mentioned above, the hunter Kamajors were viewed with a sense of awe by other inhabitants (Ferne 2001: 26–27; Fithen and Richards 2005: 128; Hoffman 2011a: 62).

The advanced skills and wealth of knowledge that were required in order to become a hunter Kamajor were passed on down from generation to generation. This means there are family lines of hunter Kamajors. Some people say that in very rare cases a hunter might take on an apprentice and pass on his craft in this way.¹⁶ This method of passing on one's hunting skills and knowledge is different from surrounding ethnic groups. According to the anthropologist Danny Hoffman, the Mende hunters acquire their abilities through long-term apprenticeships, whereas other ethnic groups around the Mende have hunting 'societies' to which members have to be initiated and hunting knowledge is passed on only within each society (these societies are discussed later) (Hoffman 2011a: 63).

The hunter Kamajors' knowledge was useful during the civil war. When the Mende land was embroiled in the fighting during the civil war, the hunter Kamajors took up leadership roles in the hunter militias and commanded the young people. Just how useful their skills were in driving out the RUF can be seen in the following extract from Casper Fithen and Paul Richards:

It was an incident in the Gola Forest [in south eastern Sierra Leone, near the border with Liberia]. [...] A single hunter drove off a fifteen-man squad of RUF fighters. He pursued them as if he were chasing his prey. That evening, the RUF squad began to make camp. It was then that he shot dead the commanding officer and wounded two others. The remaining RUF soldiers fled back to Liberia. For 18 months after that, no one in the RUF tried to enter that region again. (Fithen and Richards 2005: 127)

This event took place in the early stages of the civil war when the RUF had crossed the Liberian border and invaded Sierra Leone. The account shows how the hunter Kamajors used their hunting abilities to repel the RUF, and the case can be made that they were able to

take on their pivotal roles in the hunter militias precisely because of their hunting expertise.¹⁷

The War Kamajors as a Society

‘Societies’ that can be found in the social systems in the region around the Gulf of Guinea (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire) are social systems that are somewhat similar to a guild in nature. They are sometimes called ‘secret societies’, because knowledge shared within the society by its members is otherwise kept secret. Examples of secret societies the Mende have are the Humui, which exercises control over standards for marriage and sexual relations, Njaye, which treats mental disorders and Kpa, which has specialist knowledge of medicinal herbs (Majima 1997: 10; Little 1967). The Mende also have two societies called Poro and Sande which all adult males and females join (Little 1965).

Those wishing to join a society have to go through an initiation rite and the society’s knowledge is passed on exclusively to those who have undergone this rite. In other words, knowledge obtained through the society must not be leaked to those on the outside. It is believed that the information passed down through the society does not just cover technology and skills relating to a trade or craft but extends even to methods for using supernatural powers (Fanthorp 2007).

The Kamajor Society cannot be classified as a ‘traditional’ society as it was established during the civil war. It was invented by herbalists (witch doctors) and Islamic intellectuals and then spread through the Mende community. It was claimed that if people went through the initiation ritual to the Kamajor Society, they would gain the ability to control the power of spirits and would increase their fighting prowess; the power to repel bullets was particularly emphasised. This new Kamajor Society differed from conventional societies in a number of different ways.

First, in the Kamajor society, specific persons performed the initiation ritual (hereon, this person is referred to as the ‘initiator’¹⁸). In traditional societies, there wasn’t a specific figure who carried out the initiation rites. Those who initiate new members were chosen on a temporary basis from within the society based on age, social

standing and ability. Also, the name of the initiators could not be leaked outside the confines of the organisation. In the Kamajor Society, on the other hand, the initiators were specific herbalists or Islamic intellectuals and the members of the society (in other words, the Kamajors) did not perform the role of initiators. People who were not actually members of the society also commonly knew who the initiator was (it depends on how the numbers are counted but, at its peak, it is thought that there were around 30 initiators).

Second, the way in which the rites were carried out differed. For instance, the initiation ritual for the Poro Society to which all adult males belong is carried out once every few years. When the time comes around, information about the event is passed along from person to person, telling the potential initiates to meet on a certain day in a certain month at a certain place. People from all over the Mende land gather for the initiation rite and a shrine is made especially for it, which will only be used for that event.

The initiation for the Kamajor Society, however, was either performed at a permanent, purposely built shrine or the initiator might meet a request to go to a town or village and do the ritual there. In many cases, these permanent shrines were built in the bush near a town or village. If the shrine was made in a village, the inhabitants knew that it was there but did not try to go inside. If, on the other hand, the shrines which were set up in cities where anyone might enter would be surrounded by fences.

This demonstrates that the war Kamajors were different from both the hunter Kamajors and traditional societies in Sierra Leone. The war Kamajors were a new entity created while making use of the existing institutions of the hunter Kamajors and traditional societies.

Similarities between the War Kamajors and Hunter Kamajors

The concept behind the war Kamajors was taken from the hunter Kamajors. That is to say, it was an attempt to use the abilities of the hunter Kamajors, including their supernatural powers, in order to deal with the conflict. Nevertheless, in this book I want to emphasise that they were not one and the same but rather different things altogether. In a lot of the literature, the war Kamajors are seen as no more than an emasculated form of the hunter Kamajors simply

because they share the name ‘Kamajor’. An example of this can be found in the following excerpt from the anthropologist Marianne Ferme:

[Before the war H]unter-Warriors are great knowers and tellers of histories. [...] However, these latter day [during the civil war] hunter-warriors were more than a grass roots resistance movement inspired by local history. Quite to the contrary, the Sierra Leone case suggests that notwithstanding the legitimatizing narratives and rituals from hunting lore circulating among fighters, they are by and large a modern guerilla force trained and armed for modern warfare [...]. The label *hunters* continued to be used, and deliberately so, for its rich historical and cultural resonance, in popular imagination, with all that this term conjures up. In particular, hunters in the war have visibly claimed, through ritual objects like magical amulets covering their bodies, the powers of dissimulation associated with their craft, including the ability to make themselves invisible and impermeable to bullet. However, the very visibility of these magic objects, clothes, and rituals points to their superficiality [...]. [T]he young members of the hunting militias are taught to kill, but in a gross manner, and in combat against visible enemies. They lack the historical knowledge [...]. [Knowledge of local history and landscapes] is lost on the youthful warriors in the present conflict in Sierra Leone – though not on the older, rural members of the militia, whose activities have been largely restricted to the areas they inhabited before the war and have occurred under the leadership of local paramount chiefs. (Ferme 2001: 27)

Going by this description, Ferme’s understanding of the war Kamajors was that they were groups that were dealing with the situation of the civil war by adopting the practices of the hunter Kamajors on a superficial level. However, I have to say that they were similar but different.

Photograph 1-3: Kamajors



(From *the Democrat*, 27 February 1997)

The war Kamajors certainly adopted many of the features of the hunter Kamajors, one of which was their appearance. They dressed themselves in distinctive clothing and wore charms and amulets (Photograph 1-3). The clothes the Kamajors are wearing in this photograph are called '*ronko*'. The protective charm sown into the *ronko* is called a '*sebeh*'. It was thought that wearing both would prolong the effects of their supernatural powers (Fithen 1999). These distinctive outfits were adopted from the hunter Kamajors.

5. The Characteristics of the CDF

Next, I will outline the characteristics of the Civilian Defence Force (CDF). It was a pro-government force made up mainly of Kamajors (war Kamajors) but also included hunter militia from other ethnic groups. It was formed during the first Kabbah administration and was led by Sierra Leone's Deputy Minister of Defence, Samuel Hinga Norman. In much of the literature up to now, the CDF is described as a 'loosely organised' effort from each ethnic group (Hoffman 2007b; Włodarczyk 2009; Smith et al. 2004).

Formed over the course of the civil war, these vigilante groups were not just Mende Kamajors. Also mobilised were the Kapra and Gbethi¹⁹ of the Temne people, the Donso of the Kono and the Tamaboro of the Kuranko (apart from Gbethi, all the other names mean ‘hunter’ in the respective ethnic groups) (Bangura 2000). The majority of the CDF cadre were Kamajors, but other vigilante groups like those mentioned above were also brought into the organisation.

Defining ‘CDF’: A Discussion of the Confusion Surrounding this Term

As with the term ‘Kamajor’, there is a certain amount of confusion evident over the use of ‘CDF’. First, there are times when ‘CDF’ is used to refer to the vigilante organisations of each ethnic group. In this case, bodies like the Kamajors, Kapra, Gbethi and Donso are all included in the CDF. On the other hand, there are also times when ‘CDF’ is used to refer only to elements within each ethnic group’s self-defence forces that were mobilised by the organisation that called itself the CDF. Like the Kamajors, many vigilante groups were formed by other Sierra Leonean ethnic groups to protect their chiefdoms. The pro-government CDF mobilised some of them to fight against the RUF and AFRC. Unlike the first usage of ‘CDF’, the second one does not include members of the vigilante forces who remained in their villages. In this book, the term ‘CDF’ is used according to the second description.

However, it is not possible to clearly delineate the extent to which the members of these vigilante forces were part of the pro-government CDF because unlike a regular military unit, the CDF was not organised as a group with a clearly defined membership. Combatants were called up as necessary using human networks (they were assembled by word-of-mouth). As a consequence, there are those who just worked within the CDF for a little, and there are even some who did not participate even though they were called upon. The CDF cannot therefore be regarded as an organisation that had clear boundaries. It is for this very reason that this book posits the CDF as a network based on interpersonal relations.

Characteristics of the CDF: An Interpersonal Network, Not a Group

The anthropologist, Danny Hoffman, also saw that there was a problem with regarding the CDF as a clearly defined organisation. He began his research in 2000 when the civil war was still ongoing and has published a large body of research on the CDF (Hoffman 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Ferme and Hoffman 2004). Having seen the activities of the CDF at first hand, Hoffman said that they should not be understood as a military organisation but as the ‘militarisation of a social network’ (Hoffman 2007b).

Hoffman first proposed this interpretation at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). The SCSL was established to ‘prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996’ (United Nations 2002). At the trials, both international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean laws were applied (Mochizuki 2011). Three people from the CDF were indicted. The prosecution regarded the CDF as a military organisation with a clear chain of command and responsible for its actions. On the witness stand, Hoffman touched upon his own anthropological study to argue against that description (SCSL 9 October 2006), and he later wrote an essay based on his testimony (Hoffman 2007b).

In that essay, Hoffman argued that the CDF did not have a proper command structure in place, but rather it was an aggregation of patron–client relationships (this concept is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2). According to Hoffman, the commanders could be called ‘patrons’. Having clients or subordinates would make that person a commander. Units were thus groups of clients who had sworn personal loyalty to a particular patron. In Hoffman’s opinion, the CDF was no more than an agglomeration of such groups and there was no clear chain of command.

The patron–client relationship was also fluid, and even within the CDF clients seem to have flocked to the patrons with the most appeal. There were even people who slipped away from the CDF once they had lost their patron.

Hoffman furthermore added that the commanders were in a paternalistic position over their subordinates. In his view, in Sierra Leone an individual is always taken care of by someone and one's social position is determined by whom one is subservient to. These hierarchical relationships 'are crucial to everything from employment opportunities to ritual initiations'. Commanders provided their subordinates with food and a place to live, and dealt with any trouble that their men might bring in. The words of a commander quoted by Hoffman hint at this: The same way I give [orders] to my son, I can give them to [my fighters]' (Hoffman 2007b: 652).

This demonstrates that the CDF was an agglomeration of vertical interpersonal relationships in which clients swore loyalty to a patron who would then take care of their livelihoods. In other words, the CDF was an accumulation of vertical human networks. The rank and file, moreover, were fluid in that they would switch from one unit to another and, in some cases, leave the CDF completely. It is thus not reasonable to consider the CDF as body with a clearly organised membership.

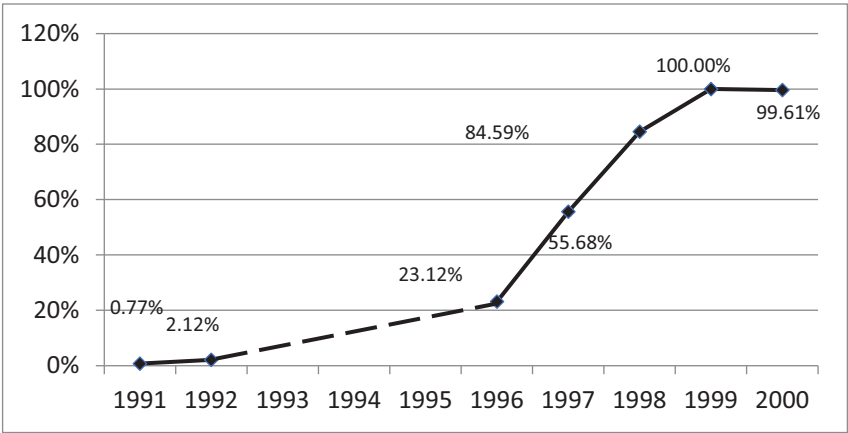
Characteristics of the CDF as Seen through Quantitative Research

Let us now take a look at the characteristics of the CDF as seen through quantitative research. After the civil war came to an end, Macartan Humphrey and Jeremy Weinstein carried out a questionnaire survey of around 1,000 ex-combatants (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004). What their results revealed is shown below. However, in their research, they used the term CDF to refer not to the pro-government Civilian Defence Force, but to all the vigilante groups from each ethnic group.

First, the members of the vigilante groups increased rapidly from 1996 onwards (during the first Kabbah administration). Humphreys and Weinstein asked their respondents about the amount of time each of them belonged to an armed group. Figure 1-4 shows the shifts in the number of members of the 'CDF' based on the results of their survey. The graph sets the value for 1999 as 100 per cent, when membership was at its highest (519 responses), and then indicates the relative changes from 1991 to 2000 (the dotted line represents a missing part of Humphreys's data set). It can be seen

from the graph that the number of people belonging to vigilante groups increased rapidly in the period from 1996 to 1999, a span which covers the first Kabbah administration, the AFRC administration and the second Kabbah administration.

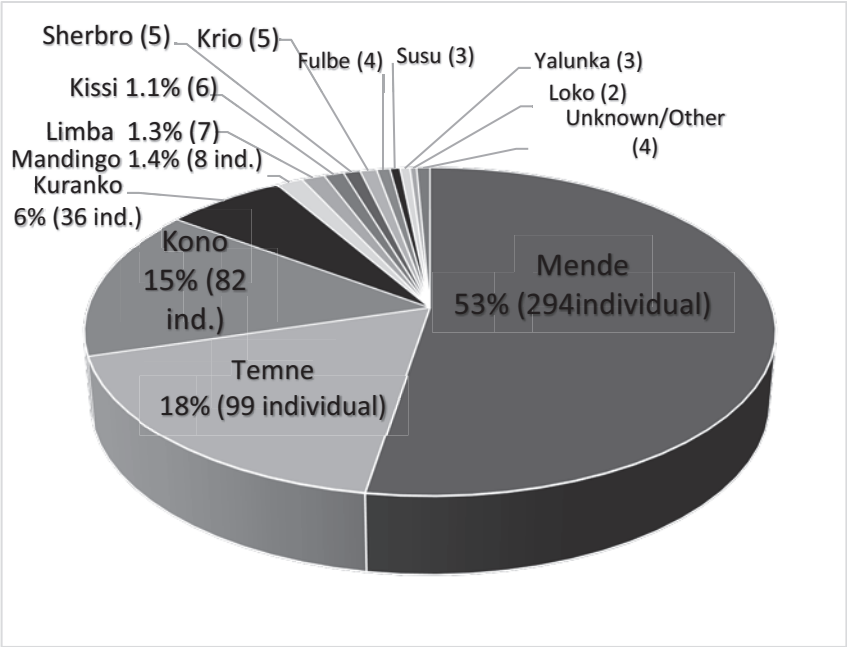
Figure 1-4: Changes in Kamajor militia membership



Note: Percentages calculated by setting 1999 strength at 100%
(Source: Created by author based on Humphrey and Weinstein (2004).)

Second, looking at the proportion of members by ethnic group shows that the number of Mende was relatively high. Figure 1-5 gives a breakdown by ethnic group of the combatants who joined the vigilante squads. Even though the Mende people only account for about 30 per cent of the total population of Sierra Leone, ethnically Mende combatants comprised 53 per cent of the membership of the vigilante squads. The high percentage of Mende is explained by the fact that it was the Mende land that saw so much of the fierce fighting during the civil war, and many Mende were called up to the Kamajors.²⁰

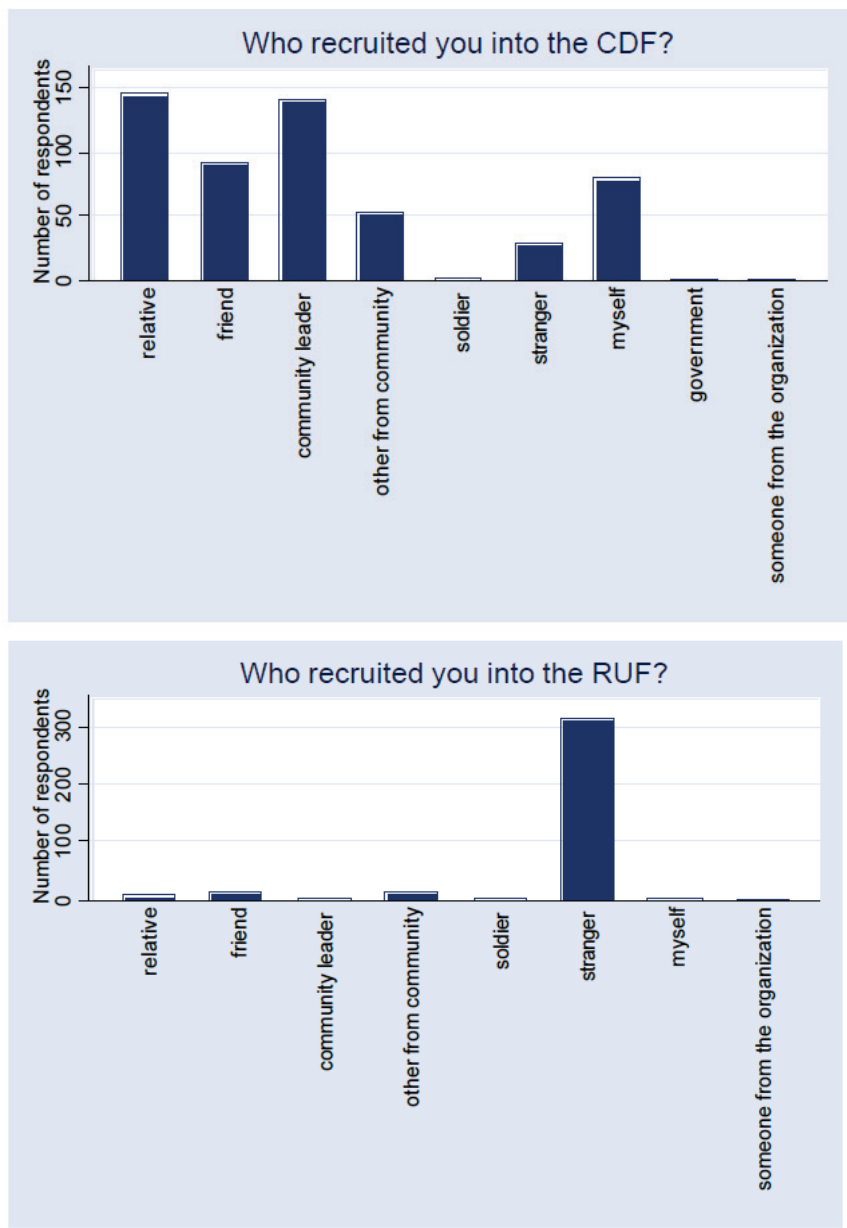
Figure 1-5: Ethnic origin of Kamajor militias



Third, most of the vigilante forces consisted of men. Humphreys and Weinstein’s survey tried as much as possible to choose former fighters at random. Even then, around 98 per cent of the respondents were men (by comparison, about 75 per cent of the RUF were men). This was probably because the vigilante organisations had a profound interest in established male social roles, such as could be seen in the warrior class that once existed or in traditional societies and hunters. In particular, women were not allowed to be involved with the Mende’s Kamajors.²¹

Fourth, the nature of the CDF as ‘the militarisation of a social network’ as Hoffman described it can also be demonstrated through quantitative studies. Figure 1-6, which is taken from Humphreys and Weinstein’s work, compares the vigilante groups to the RUF in order to show who mobilised the combatants in each organisation. According to the graph, the majority of people in the vigilante groups were mobilised by people they knew, such as friends, relatives and community leaders. In the RUF, on the other hand, most were

Figure 1-6: Who mobilised the militias?



(Source: Humphrey and Weinstein 2004)

brought in by people they did not know. According to Hoffman and Weinstein, only 15 per cent of RUF soldiers were recruited by people they knew, compared to 77 per cent in the vigilante groups. Thus, mobilisation through human networks was common in the latter and the same can be said of the pro-government CDF because it was formed from these same vigilante groups.

* * *

In this chapter, I have provided an outline of Sierra Leone and an overview of the course of the civil war, and elucidated the main characteristics of the Kamajors and CDF. In summary, the Kamajors were vigilante groups of the Mende people that were formed during the civil war, and a Society was created within the Kamajors that borrowed the main features of the hunter Kamajors. The CDF was a pro-government armed force of which the Kamajors formed the main core; however, it also included vigilante organisations from other ethnic groups. The CDF was founded on the basis of patron–client relationships and was more ‘the militarisation of a social network’ than an organisation with a clear military structure.

Constructing a Hypothesis and Establishing an Analytical Framework

In this chapter, I will propose a hypothesis and analytical framework for understanding the Kamajors/CDF. This is founded on scholarship from the field of political science concerning armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa (hereafter sub-Saharan Africa will simply be referred to as ‘Africa’). In the 1990s, large-scale armed conflicts broke out in many parts of Africa. Countries such as Somalia, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo all experienced wars severe enough to destroy the state. Moreover, in Rwanda massacres over ethnic differences took place which resulted in the deaths of around 800,000 people (Strauss 2006). Spurred by the occurrence of these grave disturbances, a number of academics began a serious study of the armed conflicts that occurred within Africa in this timeframe, and in the 20 years since then a considerable body of research has been accumulated.

The first section of this chapter reviews previous literature on African states, especially those covering neopatrimonialism and patron–client networks. The second section constructs a hypothesis to explain the transformations in the Kamajors/CDF based upon the prior research presented in the first section, and the third section offers three perspectives from which to test that hypothesis. The fourth section shows that the case of Sierra Leone meets the prerequisites of the hypothesis, and the fifth and final section presents a method to verify the hypothesis.

1. Previous Literature on States and Armed Conflicts in Africa

There is a group of research covering armed conflicts in Africa that abstracts the idiosyncrasies of individual cases and only discusses those features that are commonly seen across the continent. In this book, this body of research is termed ‘African conflict studies’. Although there is certainly room to question the validity of rolling all of Africa into one mass (Endo 2007), at the very least it should function as a starting point for observing individual cases. In other

words, by first examining whether or not the trends that are seen generally across armed conflicts in Africa are also applicable to Sierra Leone, we can gain a deeper understanding of the individual case at hand.

Why Has the 'State' in Africa Become a Matter for Discussion?

Armed conflicts in Africa started to be discussed in political science during the 1990s. Before that, from the mid 1970s to the 1980s, research commenting on how states rule was popular, and I term these studies 'studies of African states'.

'Studies of African states' prospered because of dysfunction of African states. In the 1960s, when many African countries gained independence, there were high expectations on each state to become the driving force behind economic development. There was a strong belief that each state had to take an active role in order to drag the country from poverty and bring about economic development. However, from the mid 1970s, the failures of large-scale national strategies and government-led import substitution industrialisation policies were becoming conspicuous, which led to doubts about the role of the state (Ochiai 2005). Why were the various states unable to shoulder the role they supposed to take? Studies of African states flourished as they searched to find the answers.

The concept of 'quasi state', which is proposed by Robert Jackson, best explains the situation of states in Africa at that time (Jackson 1990). Under international law, each African country is officially recognised as a state, and at least superficially they have the systems of a modern state in place. However, in spite of that, it cannot always be said that the official state mechanisms and institutions function adequately. The term 'quasi states' refers to such countries, and there are many examples of them in Africa. How are these states functioning internally, how do a ruler and political elites maintain their rule and what sort of results does that rule produce? Studies of African states try to find answers to these sorts of questions.

Such studies tend to attribute economic stagnation to malfunction of states. Especially the prevalent tendency is to claim that a sluggish economy is related to the process by which a certain

group seeks self-interests within a state (Endo 2000). For example, Jackson and Rosberg argued that it is not the official institutions but rather informal political systems constructed together by a ruler and oligarchs that define how a state is ruled (Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Richard A. Joseph coined the term ‘prebendal politics’ to refer to politics in which public office is used by someone for personal gain, and resources thereby obtained are then redistributed to the group that the person belongs to or identifies with (Joseph 1987; Ochiai 2003a). These studies posit that African states circumvent official institutions and function using means other than public institutions.

Neopatrimonialism in African States

In this book, I have decided to rely on previous literature that focuses on human networks from the collection of studies of African states, and in particular I will draw on research concerned with the neopatrimonial state.

First, I would like to offer a temporary definition of a neopatrimonial state as a state in which rule is maintained through a vertically structured network that has a ruler at its top, and in such a state, the ruler monopolises state power and wealth and misappropriates it for his or her own use; senior members of the ruling administration receive their position and a share of the material wealth by personally swearing loyalty to the ruler (Takeuchi 2009: 49–50, 54–55).

As this notion of a neopatrimonial state is perhaps now generally accepted, it is necessary to examine how this notion of the patrimonial state had been constructed. The concept of a ‘patrimonial state’ (without the ‘neo’ prefix) was first proposed by the Swiss political thinker Karl Ludwig von Haller (1768–1854). He called states which were regarded as part of the sovereign’s personal hereditary wealth, such as were seen during the mediaeval era, ‘Patrimonial-Staaten’. In mediaeval states, the ruler alone possessed the means to rule; there was no distinction made between his right to rule and right of possession, nor were public law and private law separated. He had possession rights not only over the land but also the people who lived on his land, and the state’s public finances were regarded as his personal income. Haller advocated the concept of

patrimonial states as the ideal type of state while rejecting absolute monarchies and civilian rule (liberalism and democracy) (Takazawa 1998).

The ideas put forward by Haller became more widely known after they were adopted by the sociologist Max Weber (Bakker 2006). In his essay 'Soziologie der Herrschaft (The Sociology of Rule)', Weber suggested that the patrimonial state can be seen in traditional forms of power (Weber's paper is in a collection of essays titled *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Economy and Society) that was published in 1922 after his death). He describes the patrimonial state as one in which a single autocratic monarch reigns as a paternalistic authority and bureaucrats who personally serve the monarch carry out the functions of ruling (Mukai et al. 1979). This concept by Weber is to explain how pre-modern states were ruled. It is not for the notion for understanding modern states.

Aristide Zolberg was the first to apply this concept to an analysis of the modern state (Zolberg 1966). Citing Weber in his analysis of party politics observed in West African countries after independence, Zolberg claimed that the same patrimonial systems described by Weber could be seen in newly independent states in West Africa. In other words, relationships based on personal loyalty can be seen between the ruler and his subordinates and also between the ruling clique and its followers. In such circumstances, Zolberg argued that 'the patrimonial system can coexist with bureaucracy' (Zolberg 1966: 140–141). He argued that the reason why elements of traditional rule can still be found in the region was because they are leftovers from pre-independence days, adding that it was 'because this was the way that had always been used'.

Guenther Roth, who also use the term of patrimonial state, argued that these personal bonds are not relations based on loyalty but on material rewards (Roth 1971[1968]). Like Zolberg, he used Weber's idea of the patrimonial state to support his study of emergent states. However, unlike Weber, in Roth's interpretation of the patrimonial state, he did not believe that trust in the ruler's personal qualifications was necessary, and instead he asserted that the ruler and subordinates 'are inseparably linked to material incentives and rewards' (Roth 1971[1968]). That is to say the subordinates do

not swear allegiance to a paternalistic authority, but are instead subjugated to economic interests, and thus the ruler must distribute economic gains in order to keep his own position as ruler. Roth's argument that control was maintained by the distribution of economic returns later came to be shared by many scholars.

One of such scholars, Jean-François Médard, added the prefix 'neo' to the concept of patrimonialism in order to put forward the concept of the 'neopatrimonial state' (Médard 1982). In the patrimonial states envisaged by Weber, the idea of 'public' simply does not exist. In other words, there was no distinction between public and private. Roth and Zolberg applied Weber's argument to modern states without making any adjustments to it (Von Soet 2010: 3; Okano 2011a: 74). On the other hand, Médard conceived that patrimonialism in modern states differed from the traditional form in the point that public resources were being misappropriated for private use. In a modern state, official institutions are in put place and a system is created that is predicated on a distinction between public and private. However, in neopatrimonial state, that distinction is defied and public resources are diverted to private purposes. Médard proposed the term 'neopatrimonial state' to emphasise this feature seen in some modern states (Bach 2012: 28).

The two concepts of patrimonial and neopatrimonial states are slightly different, but in as far as they are applied only to modern states, there is ultimately no difference in the fact that they both refer to states in which power is maintained by diverting public resources for private use. For this reason, up to now the terms patrimonial state and neopatrimonial state have been used interchangeably without any perceptible distinction. However, the latter term appears to have become more established in the arguments since the 1990s (Bratton and Van de Waal 1994; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Erdmann and Engel 2006). Therefore, from here on in this book, only the terms 'neopatrimonial' and 'neopatrimonialism' will be used.

As a result of the discussion thus far, it is perhaps worthwhile to clarify the definition of 'neopatrimonialism'. The definition of the term as it is now commonly used by scholars can be described as follows:

A neopatrimonial state indicates a state in which the ruler monopolizes and appropriates power, wealth, and interests, and makes use of the system of rule run by personal subordinates to govern the territory and populace. In a neopatrimonial state, the ruler distributes various 'resources', such as wealth, status, contracts, employment, rights and interests and employment opportunities, through state and administrative mechanisms. In return, the recipients of this largesse offer their support, loyalty and submission.²²

In the body of research on neopatrimonialism, there are some studies before the early 1980s that give a certain amount of approval towards this system. For instance, Lemarchand perceived functions in the neopatrimonial state that bring people divided by ethnicity and class together under the banner of the state (Lemarchand 1972). Additionally, Jackson and Rosberg portrayed a mechanism by which the ruler skilfully controls the political elite through his or her own abilities to establish personal control (Jackson and Rosberg 1982).

From the 1980s onwards, however, the perception of neopatrimonialism began to take on a more negative tone. It came to be regarded that neopatrimonialism is the primary cause of economic stagnation, corruption, dysfunction of state apparatus, authoritarianism, political violence, and coup d'états (Ochiai 2005; Chabal and Daloz 1999: 83; Erdmann and Engel 2006; Pitcher et al. 2009; Reno 1995a, 1995b; Sandbrook 1985, 1998 [1972]; Szeftel 2000).

From Neopatrimonialism to Patron–Client Networks

In discussions of neopatrimonial states, the arguments initially focus on upper echelon of state apparatus in which the relation between a ruler and his personal subordinates is constructed. Later, the argument evolved to suggest that the relationship of dependency is not only limited between the rulers and his direct subordinates, but also extended to the ordinary people, and that networks of interpersonal relationships are used as a tool to govern the general populace. To look at it from a different perspective, the argument switched from an internal look at the mechanisms of state to a wider discussion of society as whole within that particular state.

The shift most likely came about because patrimonial states started to be discussed in connection with the concept of patron–client relations. This type of relationship exists between two people who know each other and was defined by James Scott thus:

The patron-client relationship – an exchange relationship between roles – may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron. (Scott 1972: 92)

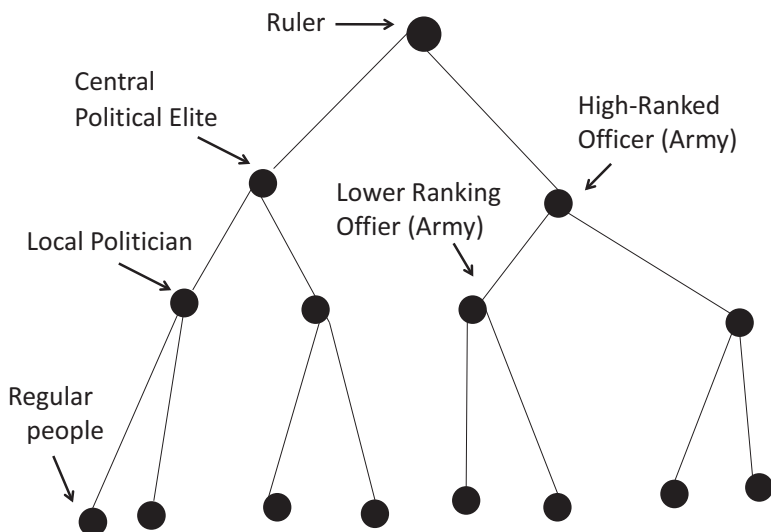
Put simply, a patron–client relationship is a mutually dependent relationship between two persons who have different social positions and financial power.

In a neopatrimonial state, a ruler cannot maintain his position without administrative elites that are personally subservient to him; he needs to tie them to him by distributing resources. This shows us one type of patron–client relationship, but it does not end with those between the ruler and subordinates. As one person's client can also be another person's patron, then patron–client relationships can link up in a sort of pyramid structure. A minor provincial boss could be a client of larger boss in a capital city and, at the same time, be a patron of his own clients (Kurimoto 2000a). The patron–client relationship connects over several strata to form vertical human networks, which in turn are used to maintain control of the state. For example, when a national politician (major boss) comes up for election, the provincial bosses who are his clients use their connections with their relatives, job and voluntary associations to collect votes for their leader in central government (in other words, they mobilise their own clients). This stratified patron–client relationship thus supports the rule of the state (Sandbrook 1998[1972]). In this book, multilayered networks consisting of multiple patrons and clients are referred to 'patron–client networks', or are simply abbreviated to 'PC networks'.

The debate over PC networks has unfolded without a clear distinction being made with the discussion of neopatrimonial states. To begin with, the focus of patrimonialism was on the relationship between a ruler and the political elite who are subservient to him. However, by merging this with the concept of PC networks, the focus switched to patron–client relationships that are widely entrenched in society (cf. Takeuchi 2009; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Lemarchand 1972).

Figure 2-1 is a conceptualisation of a PC network in a neopatrimonial state. In such cases, the person at the top of the network is the ruler and beneath him are several interconnected strata of clients. The ruler is the ultimate patron; he secures clients by distributing resources to them and rules the country. As for the patrons on their respective levels, to maintain their position they take resources received from their patron and redistribute them to their clients. The clients eagerly await benefits from their patron. Even the general populace tries to extract resources necessary for survival from those that have them by making use of all kinds of human networks, including regional bonds and blood relationships. The types of resources are wide ranging including employment opportunities, assistance with food, clothing and shelter, and even information (Takahashi 1998: 48).

Figure 2-1: The patron–client network



Armed Conflict and the Dissolution of PC Networks

Faced with the outbreak of multiple armed conflicts in the 1990s, the concept of neopatrimonial states and PC networks came to be used as a model to explain why these armed conflicts started (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Reno 1995a, 1998; Richards 1996; Takeuchi 2000, 2005, 2009; Kurimoto 2000a, 2000b). The first instance this analytical framework appeared was in an article by Richard Sandbrook published in 1972 (Sandbrook 1998[1972]). He used PC networks as analytical framework to explain the mechanisms behind political upheavals such as ethnic conflicts and military coup d'états.

What Sandbrook imagined was not a network that converged on a single ruler such as is found in a neopatrimonial state. He believed that at the centre of power there were several political elites, each of which had its own PC network that formed its support base; he did not believe that the networks all converged on a single leader. In other words, according to his argument, there were multiple networks existing side by side that formed the top stratum of the political elite. He also pointed out that PC networks are often formed

along ethnic and regional lines, and the client groups of a particular politician tend to lean towards a specific ethnic group and region.

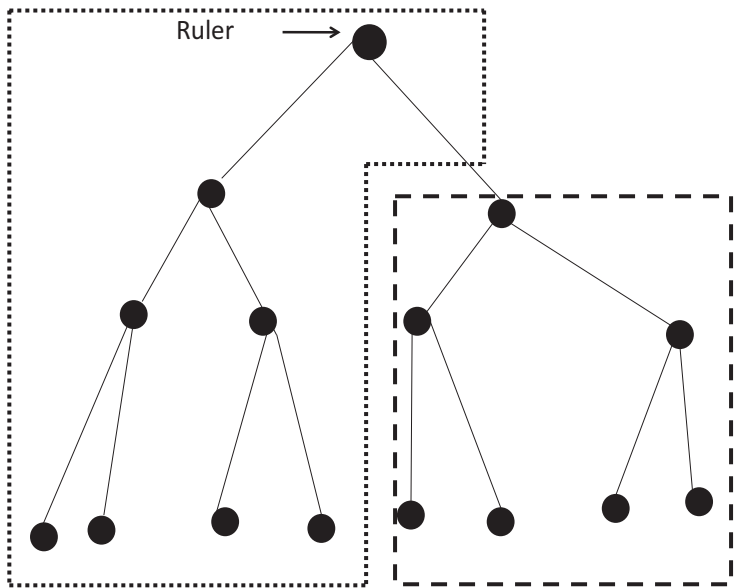
According to Sandbrook, a conflict among the political elite could easily change into a conflict between PC networks as the patrons might call upon their clients to act, and this would result in the initial dispute expanding beyond the political arena. It could also be said that military coup d'états occur when political elites that have clients in the armed forces mobilise them. Furthermore, regional conflicts between ethnic groups can be seen as the fallout from confrontations among the elite at the heart of government as they spill over and spread to agricultural communities via patron–client relationships (As PC networks tend to lean heavily on a particular ethnic group or region, disputes between PC networks appear superficially to be ethnic conflicts) (Sandbrook 1998[1972]).

In the coup d'états and ethnic conflicts of the 1960s and 70s that Sandbrook examined there were relatively few victims and they were less intense than the armed struggles of the 1990s (cf. Takeuchi 2000: 20).

The Impetus for Dissolving PC Networks Headed by a Ruler

Takeuchi explained the outbreak of armed conflicts in the 1990s using a similar analytical framework to Sandbrook's (Takeuchi 2009). However, whereas Sandbrook posited that political unrest is brought about by confrontation between PC networks operated by multiple political elites at the centre of power, Takeuchi suggested that armed conflicts occur when a single PC network tied to the ruler fractures and a confrontation takes place within the now fractured network (Figure 2-2). He argued that these ruptures were triggered by political and economic shifts that were seen in the 1980s and 1990s. Faced with these changes, PC networks that were headed by a single ruler split apart in many cases, resulting in the frequent outbreak of armed conflicts.

Figure 2-2: Rifts in the patron–client network



First, I will describe the economic factors behind the changes. To begin with, economic stagnation since the 1980s led to a decrease in the amount of resources patrons could distribute. Due to the two oil shocks in the 1970s the global economy had slowed down and this, of course, had a negative impact on Africa. Production around the world stagnated, causing a drop in demand for primary products and their global market price plummeted. As the majority of African states rely on primary products for their economy, they suffered from both a decrease in export volume and a drop in the price of their exports. They also took a hit on the import side as well. The rise in the price of crude oil brought about by the oil shock caused commodity prices to climb. This in turn sent the cost of imported goods soaring, thereby collapsing the balance of trade for many African countries, and it led them to experience economic deterioration, as well as deficits in their public finances and decrease in foreign revenues (Takahashi and Masaki 2004). The result was that there was a drop in the amount of resources a patron could distribute.

Second, reforms implemented under auspices of international organisations to solve the economic problems brought about massive changes to the social and economic structures of each country, as well as leading to a reduction in the amount of resources a patron could distribute.

Due to the imbalance of trade and an increase in accumulated debt, the African countries had to enter into debt-rescheduling negotiations with their creditor nations (the USA, Japan and various European countries). As a prerequisite for the talks, the debtor nations had to accept structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) proposed by the International Monetary Fund or World Bank (Katsumata 2000). According to the terms of these programmes blame for the economic stagnation was placed squarely at the door of the economic policies adopted by each African state after independence. Among the policies that were questioned were the inefficient management of public-sector corporations, policies protecting public-sector corporations from foreign competition (trade policies and investment management policies) and subsidies for key agricultural products lowering the price of crops, which intended to keep down the cost of living for urban dwellers (cf. Bates 1984, 2008). Based on the terms of the SAPs, these policies were deemed to be an obstruction to an efficient economy, and it was argued that if these obstacles were removed then the principle of market economy would work and the economy would be revitalised. This scenario, which was devised by experts from the IMF and World Bank, was then applied wholesale to countries all over Africa (Katsumata 2000).

The SAPs further reduced the resources necessary to maintain the PC networks. In neopatrimonial states, political elites made use of state organisations to pursue personal gain. Their methods included the pocketing of profits from state-run corporations, kickbacks for providing permits and licensing rights and appropriating aid. The patrons used the resources gained through this as a fund to provide economic benefits to their clients. However, the amount of resources decreased due to the economic slowdown, and opportunities to seize resources were also reduced due to the SAPs in place.

Next are the political causes that led to the dissolution of the PC networks. The 1990s saw a shift in aid policies from developed nations in that non-democratic regimes were no longer given assistance, and the African nations were unable to fight back against this. One by one, countries under single party rule or a military junta changed to a multi-party political system. Out of 48 states in Africa in 1989, 29 had single party rule, but just four years later they had all disappeared (Takeuchi 2005: 91).

With the introduction of multi-party politics, the political elites that had been so dependent on a particular ruler now began to emerge as leaders of opposition parties. Or, to put it another way, they separated from the ruler's PC network and adopted a position of autonomy. If they could gain the support of the people, they would become a threat to the incumbent ruler.

In election campaigns, candidates would mobilise their clients, which in turn would bring people more deeply into the PC networks than ever before. Political confrontations among political elites would escalate into clashes between their respective PC networks. Since the candidates would arm supporters with guns and provide ammunition, the confrontations would then escalate into armed conflicts (Takeuchi 2009: 62). In other words, armed conflicts began when patrons mobilised their clients and provided with weapons for disputes among the political elites (Takeuchi 2000, 2009).

The Problems with Takeuchi's Theory

According to Takeuchi's argument, the armed conflicts in Africa of the 1990s broke out because the vertical human networks were influenced by the social situation. With some small modifications, this explanation can certainly be applied to most of the armed conflicts that occurred within that timeframe in Africa. Many examples, such as Liberia and the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) fit this description, albeit with some minor changes, and it can be said to be a very apt explanatory model for this period. However, Takeuchi's goal was to explain the outbreak of armed conflicts, thus making it different from this book, which aims to track the course of the civil war in Sierra Leone from its beginning to its end. Therefore, I cannot apply Takeuchi's explanatory model as it is.

The following problems should be surmounted in order to turn the Takeuchi framework into an explanatory model for explaining the course of the war.

First, Takeuchi focused only on vertical human networks. In other words, he attempted to explain the situation by reducing multiple human networks that might actually be entangled with each other to just PC networks. This simplification might be sufficient to account for the outbreak of armed conflicts, but it is not enough to describe the course of a war from its outbreak to its conclusion. If we rely only on the framework of vertical networks in our examination, we might overlook the dynamics of the civil war.

The discussion of networks based on interpersonal relations in African states has not been restricted to vertical examples. The French political scientist Jean-François Bayart drew attention to horizontal human networks that exist in the background of African politics. According to Bayart, African states, due to their smallness, the people who make up the elites all know each other regardless of whether they are in the government or private sector, and they often conspire to reap benefits for themselves. The political elite may use their position to assist the business elite; for example, by awarding exclusive concessions to extract natural resources or illegally waiving fees for using port facilities and airports. They may even on occasion tacitly permit smuggling. In exchange for these benefits, the business elite give the politicians kickbacks (Bayart 1993). He argued that these networks of elites that traverse horizontally across both the public and private sector lead to endemic corruption and dysfunctional states.

Bayart further claimed that such horizontal networks not only link up the political and business elites, but that in African nations all social strata are joined up via networks. They are formed everywhere including mutual aid groups, associations of people from the same town or province, relationships with friends and relatives, political, religious and trade associations, groups of people with the same hobby or interest, business contacts and drinking friends at a local bar. The networks of relationships among the elites described above are just one example of these. Everything, including national politics, functions within crisscrossing networks of these interpersonal

relationships. Bayart called states like this ‘rhizome states’, as he compared the networks that spread both upwards and outwards and intertwine as they grow unseen underground to rhizomes or creeping rootstalks. Rhizome states function more through the writhing mass of interpersonal relationships that stretch throughout the country than through official institutions and bureaucratic procedures (Bayart 1993: 219; Obayashi 1996: 125).

As Bayart’s argument reveals, the networks of interpersonal relationships that function in African states are not just limited to vertical networks. Patron–client relationships are no more than a part of the broader rhizome networks. Therefore, if we focus only on vertical networks here, we might miss certain factors that helped shape the civil war in Sierra Leone.

The second problem with Takeuchi’s explanatory model lies in that it cannot describe the dynamic that occurs as networks transform. The purpose of his research was to explain the outbreak of conflicts in Africa, which meant that he only needed to examine the changes that took place in PC networks around the time each conflict started. When, on the other hand, the course of a conflict is being put under the microscope, it is vital to look at PC networks and rhizome networks as constantly changing fluid entities and understand their transformation as a process.

Solutions to the Problems

In order to overcome these two problems, this book takes its lead from an argument advanced by Mats Utas. Utas simply called what Bayart calls the rhizome networks ‘informal networks’. According to Utas, in Africa when something is being attempted in politics or with the economy, it is not the formal institutions that function but rather informal networks. Whether it be official decision-making at the state level or the trading of arms or illegal drugs, it is these informal networks functioning behind the scenes that move matters along (Utas 2012).

Utas claims that the existence of a ‘big man’ is the key to informal networks. A big man is defined as an influential person who has the ability to command and instigate mass action based on his informal abilities to help out people privately. His power is not dependent

upon institutional, social or historical contexts, but solely his personal abilities (Utas 2012: 6).²³

The concept of the big man as put forward by Utas is largely synonymous with the patron in PC networks, but there are several points that make it somewhat different. In presenting the concept, Utas tried to depict certain specific features of patrons that could not be fully explained in the theory of PC networks.

First, big men do not generally control their followers. If a big man cannot offer them economic potential as well as protection and social security, his followers will have no difficulty in leaving him. To put it another way, followers are not always subordinate to a specific big man, but rather they can freely join and leave networks controlled by big men (Utas 2012: 8). This demonstrates that PC networks are fluid and ever changeable.

Second, networks do not exist continuously but rather they appear when the need arises. A big man has a 'loose social web' which he can use to call upon his followers as and when required. When he attempts to take some sort of action, he chooses the right people from that web to achieve his goals. While that action is ongoing, the network exists and functions, but when it ends the network is dissolved. This demonstrates that the existence of PC networks is not by nature permanent, but instead they appear and then disappear (Utas 2012: 8–9).

Finally, even when a network comes into existence, it does not mean that the people acting in it are fixed. When the big man takes action, he operates as a node. If a certain person's influence is essential to achieve a certain goal or action, that person will emerge as a big man. However, if his role shrinks, then he will separate from the network. The clients are the same, so if they cannot or will not fulfil their role, they have no choice but to leave the network (Utas 2012).

We should reconsider PC networks based on the three points given above. For Utas, a rhizome network is not necessarily always visible. It only emerges when people are mobilised to execute some sort of action. Based on Utas's argument, PC networks appear as and when required, from the rhizome network of interpersonal relationships via the mobilisation of followers by big men. Internally,

PC networks are in a constant state of flux, and the people who join are often replaced and even the form of the network itself can change.

Takeuchi's analytical framework of PC networks is useful for understanding the beginnings of armed conflicts. However, its discussion of vertical networks of interpersonal relationships cannot be deemed adequate for examining how a conflict develops over the course of time. In order to consider how PC networks are formed and how they change, we must also examine the rhizome networks that exist in the background.

2. Hypothesis of this Book

As outlined in the first chapter, a patron–client relationship existed between the commander and the combatants under him in the Kamajors/CDF. We can thus regard the Kamajors/CDF as an agglomeration or bundle, of PC networks. In the early stage of the civil war, separate groups of Kamajors formed and operated independently in the various chiefdoms. Each of the Kamajor groups may be regarded as small individual PC networks. The CDF, on the other hand, can be described as a single large PC network which was created by uniting those independent Kamajor groups. That is to say the process by which the local Kamajor groups consolidated into the pro-government CDF can be understood as the convergence of multiple smaller PC networks into one massive one.

Figure 2-3 describes this phenomenon in greater detail. At the time when the Kamajors were starting to form, they were vigilante forces based in the individual chiefdoms. Consequently, the Kamajor PC networks tended to be small in scale and the head of the chiefdom (paramount chief; see later discussion for more details) sat at the top (Fig. 2-3 ①). The Kamajors gradually coalesced as they began to transcend the boundaries of the chiefdoms to cooperate with each other and form into larger PC networks. In other words, the many little PC networks were combined into several larger ones, which existed alongside each other (Fig. 2-3 ②). From these, a dominant PC network emerged with more power (Fig. 2-3 ③). It then drew other networks under its umbrella and eventually the Kamajors were

unified into a single PC network that was the pro-government CDF (Fig. 2-3 (4)).

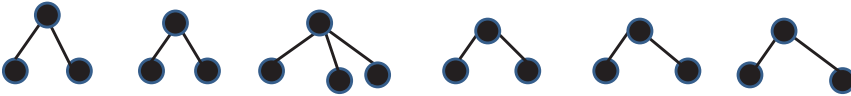
Rhizome network was considered to play its role in the process that the PC networks were drawing together. Individuals with key roles in the Kamajors had local, national, transnational and global networks of contacts, and they operated by exploiting them to the full. They used these rhizome networks to search for solutions to the situation they were facing and, as this happened, people who were previously unknown to each other joined up to work together. This process happened over and over again, leading to a single human network called the CDF.

It is probable that individuals who rose up to become leaders in the CDF maintained these channels of contacts to secure resources in order to control their influence and they kept hold of their positions of leadership by distributing those resources among their subordinates.

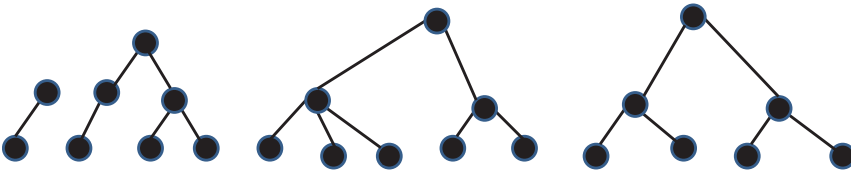
I realised, during my fieldwork in Sierra Leone, that the transformation process of the Kamajors to the CDF can be abstracted like this. Therefore, it is perhaps not right to call this a hypothesis, but for the sake of expediency, I have decided to call the process I have just described my hypothesis. The course of the transformation seen in the Kamajors/CDF is described from Chapter 4 onwards in this book, and proving the hypothesis is a pivotal part of that account.

Figure 2-3 Hypothesis of this study

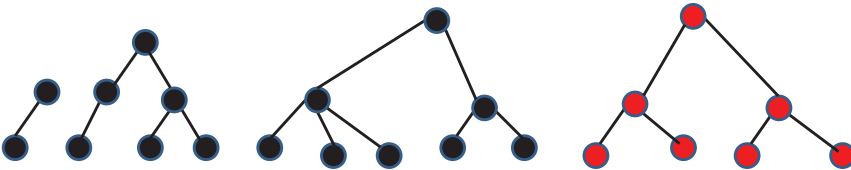
① When the Kamajors were first formed, they were vigilante groups operating at the chiefdom level.



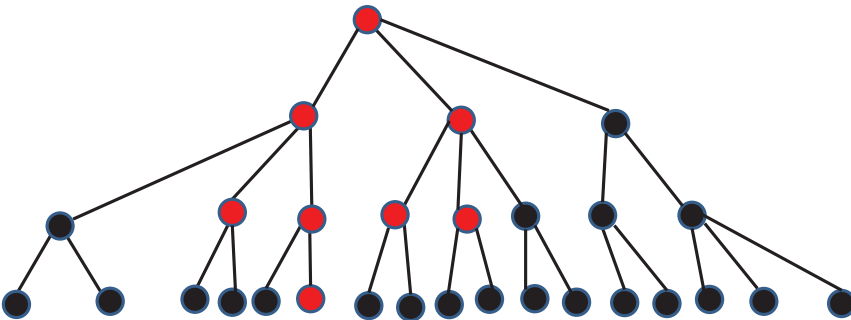
② Individuals in different groups began to interact and work together, and gradually larger networks were formed through the connection of multiple smaller networks. They begin to compete with each other.



③ A dominant PC network begins to emerge (see white circles in diagram.)



④ The dominant PC network continues to bring the other networks under its control, and the result of this is the Kamajors being transformed into the PC network that becomes the pro-government paramilitary group called the Civil Defence Forces.



3. Three Analytical Perspectives

This book focuses on three points to examine the metamorphosis in the PC network of the Kamajor/CDF and verify the hypothesis.

The first point is interpersonal relations. This book looks at what sort of individuals in the armed factions gained ascendancy and what sort of interpersonal relations they and the people around them made use of. In particular, it reveals the transformations that took place in the Kamajors/CDF by focusing attention on the sort of interpersonal relationships maintained by individuals in the higher tiers of the organisation.

The second point is power struggles. Commanders within an armed group are thought to have confronted each other in order to gain more power. In order to become a high-ranking patron, individuals had to attract clients and secure the resources to retain them. Conversely, commanders who lost their access to resources would be weeded out. They therefore had to ensure that resources kept coming to them. For this reason, the changes in the PC networks of an armed group cannot be understood without looking at the power struggles behind the interpersonal relations.

Third is how the organisations functioned. Studies of African states have described how states function when official institutions are bypassed. Chabal and Daloz posited that in states where official institutions no longer function and where corruption and political violence are prevalent, the political elites achieve their personal benefits by skilfully manipulating them. They labelled such a skill the 'political instrumentalization of disorder' (Chabal and Daloz 1999). It is likely that the same methods are used within armed groups: in the situation of armed conflicts, especially within armed factions, such uses of disorder were also likely to be observed. Consequently, even if efficient systems and organisational structures were tried to be created in an armed group that was fighting in the civil war, they would still be bypassed and made ineffective by its members. That being the case, it is necessary to examine how commanders reaped profits for themselves and how the behaviour of the commanders

affected their organisation. Thus, the actual function of an organisation needs to be elucidated.

I reveal the actual function of an organisation by setting three questions. First is how they procured military materials, daily commodities and funds, and how they were then distributed. In this book, military materials, daily commodities and funds are bundled together under the term 'resources'. Armed groups need resources to operate. Within a group, resources were obtained by patrons and then distributed through their PC networks. Since PC networks were fluid and clients could choose their patrons, patrons had to provide resources to maintain the linkage with clients. It means that only those who were adept at obtaining resources could gather more clients and could be higher patrons. Considering this, it is essential to know who procured and distributed the resources, and how they did it, in order to understand the transformations within the armed groups. The second question to reveal the actual function of an organisation is how the combatants were mobilised. PC networks were mobilised through rhizome networks (77 per cent of the CDF combatants were mobilised by people they knew). In addition, PC networks unified and expanded via the so-called big men. Interpersonal relationships used to mobilise combatants could change over time, so it is necessary to achieve a chronological understanding of any transformations in the human networks that were used to assemble troops. The third question that needs to be examined is on the organisational structure and chain of command. It is quite natural for an organisation to seek better efficiency when expanding its operations, such as by formalising the chain of command or reshaping the organisational structure. On the other hand, if the organisation is efficient and rational, then it becomes more difficult for the patron to use his clients for his own benefit. Within each armed group, patrons on different levels bypassed the organisational structure or refused to make it more efficient because they wanted to mobilise their clients for their own personal goals, and it is for this reason that it is important to look at the chain of command and the structure of the organisation, as well as how patrons circumvented them.

Thus, by examining (1) the interpersonal relationships within the networks, (2) the struggles for power and (3) the functions of the organisation, this book traces the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF

4. Examining the Case of Sierra Leone

The Premise for the Hypothesis

For the hypothesis of this book to be effective in explaining the Kamajors/CDF, it has to be assumed that Sierra Leone presents the appearance of a patrimonial state and that patron–client relations exist within its society.

To begin with, the concept of the patrimonial state is often used to analyse Sierra Leone (Clapham 1982; Kandeh 1992; Reno 1995b, 1998). A political scientist Christopher Clapham points out that a form of politics by which a ruler brought together followers through the distribution of resources was evident even before independence (Clapham 1982). William Reno also describes how the former president Siaka Stevens, who built the system of one party rule in Sierra Leone, managed to obtain resources to maintain his grip on power. Stevens accumulated personal wealth by circumventing the official apparatus of state, including diverting tax money from diamonds and receiving kickbacks from Lebanese merchants who controlled Sierra Leone's economy in exchange for giving them special treatments (Reno 1995b). Based on the preceding literature referenced above, Sierra Leone can be deemed to have had the characteristics of a neopatrimonialist state.

Next, there has also been a lot written about Sierra Leone's society using the concept of the patron–client relationship. As discussed earlier, Hoffman states that everyone in Sierra Leone must be linked in a relationship of patronage or clientship or, as the Mende say, 'everyone must be accounted for by someone else' (Hoffman 2007b). Fithen and Richards introduce a Sierra Leonean saying, 'No one stands by him or herself, everyone is behind someone' (Fithen and Richard 2005: 12). Furthermore, Jimmy Kandeh claims that the patron–client relationship is embedded even among the workers and farmers, in that they rely on powerful local figures and the central

government as their patrons and seek help from them (Kandeh 1992: 95).

An anthropologist, Krijn Peters, also described social customs that could be called patron–client relations. According to Peters, some students rely on wealthy relatives or their parents’ patrons for tuition fees. In return for having their tuition paid, the students work for the patron. For example, they might go to work in a diamond mine during their holidays or live in the patron’s home and do agricultural work and odd jobs (Peters 2004: 20).

During my fieldwork, I sometimes saw young men and women living at their patron’s house as Peters described. At the house I stayed in, in addition to the husband and wife and their children, there was a young man in his early twenties living there who did the cooking, cleaning, washing and other housework. He told me that he had been working there since he was 17 years old. As he lived with the family, they paid for his school fees so he could go to high school and they also covered other assorted expenses (as he had been unable to receive an education due to the civil war, he was only now attending high school even though he was into his twenties). The head of the house said that the young man he was looking after was the son of an acquaintance. He told me that he wanted to make the young man into a successful merchant.

Young men like this are called ‘apprentices’. A closer look at the relationship apprentices have with their masters reveals that the patron–client relationship is not simply one of a superior and inferior based on mutual benefit; it is intricately intertwined with social customs and norms. It is taken for granted that those who are financially secure will take a young person in their mid-teens under their wing. They have to provide that young person with an education and teach him or her the rules of society. It also goes without saying that the apprentice has to obey the master.

Finding patrons and swearing loyalty to them also functions to some extent as a safety net for young people. With employment limited and cash income unstable, the people in Sierra Leone have always tried to guarantee their livelihoods and security by developing patron–client relationships, and this held true even during the civil war period. As the anthropologist William P. Murphy points out,

combatants gain security, protection, food and other means to survive (i.e. the skills and tools necessary for warfare) by entering into a patron–client relationship with a commander (Murphy 2003). In other words, establishing a personal relationship with a specific commander, functions as a form of safety net. Therefore, human relationships that can be described as ‘patron–client relationships’ are prevalent in Sierra Leone, but they not only based on economic benefits as the notion of a patron–client relation tends to suggest.

The Continuation of PC Networks during the Sierra Leone Civil War

The concepts of neopatrimonialism and patron–client relationships have been used to analyse Sierra Leone. However, the outbreak of the civil war does not fit into the model put forward by Takeuchi. According to Takeuchi, armed conflicts break out due to the escalation of power struggles within the central government (political elite). On the other hand, in the case of Sierra Leone, the RUF grew out of the increasing extremism of the student movement, and what might be called the political elite of the central government, in fact, played no part in it (Ochiai 2003a).

However, it does not mean that the PC network has no relations with the civil war. Paul Richards looked at PC networks in a different way from Takeuchi. Richards claimed that young people who were excluded from the PC networks at the heart of the state went on to form the RUF. To summarise Richards, Sierra Leone presented the appearance of a neopatrimonial state and the political elite were distributing resources personally to their followers. Public officials, including doctors and teachers, were receiving benefits in the form of financial subsidies and food rations (rice). Access to scholarships and public health and sanitation also functioned as a mode of resource distribution. However, in the 1980s, Sierra Leone was faced with both economic decline and a decrease in the amount of overseas aid it received, which resulted in insufficient resources to distribute. The people’s livelihoods, which up to then they had just about been able to keep up through benefits received from their politicians, could no longer be maintained at their current level. This led to growing dissatisfaction, especially among the young people. Deprived of the benefits they received from the state, the ‘educated

class' threw themselves into the anti-government movement (specifically, as they were no longer able to get the help of the political elite in finding jobs for them, the number of educated young people who could not find work increased). This is reflected by the fact that the ranks of the early RUF included former students who had been unable to find jobs even after leaving university and teachers who had only been able to find work in the provinces. Comprised of people from such backgrounds, the RUF then further expanded by absorbing more and more young people into its forces from places they invaded. Many of these new young recruits had not been able to receive any sort of benefits from the leaders in their chiefdom's villages and were instead the target of exploitation (summarised from Richards 1996: 34–37). In Richards's view, the PC networks built around the state shrank due to a decrease in the amount of resources it was able to distribute, and those who were pushed out of the network created the rebel organisation.

This state-level interpretation can also be corroborated by several micro studies. Peters states people who were no longer able to receive benefits from their patrons due to the economic decline went on to join the RUF. The income of the patrons themselves had dropped because the problems with the economy, so young people who depended on their patrons for education and work opportunities were no longer able to do so and faced setbacks in their careers. This was the type of people the RUF took in (Peters 2004: 20).

The evidence presented above shows the validity of analysing the Sierra Leone civil war through lens of PC networks.

5. Verifying the Hypothesis

PC networks consist of patron–client relationships which are based on face-to-face relations. However, due to the sheer size of the CDF, it is impossible to capture the interpersonal relationships within the organisation as a whole. The CDF had a large number of personnel; those who officially gave up their weapons in the disarmament process numbered 37,000 alone. In addition to them, there were also many fighters who were not disarmed because they did not meet the required standard (Thusi and Meek 2003). Because

of its largeness, I need a little ingenuity to verify the hypothesis – namely that the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF was a process by which scattered PC networks were unified into a single PC network. This book attempts an analysis with a two-level approach. The levels this book looks at are as indicated below.

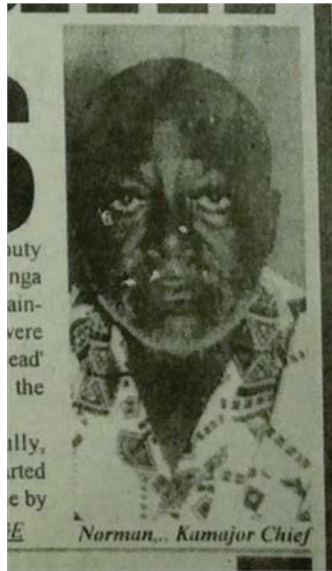
Level One: the CDF-wide PC network

The first level is examining the entire PC network of the CDF. The focus here is on three individuals who were in the positions of leadership in the CDF, and were prosecuted by the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Special Court was established in 2002, its purpose being ‘to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996 [in other words, from the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord]’ (Article 1, Agreement Between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone). Several people from the AFRC, RUF and CDF who had been in positions of leadership in their respective organisations were prosecuted (Mochizuki 2011: 125).

The three people from the CDF who were put on trial were Samuel Hinga Norman, Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana. The first individual, Hinga Norman, is described as the *de facto* leader of the CDF. After leading the Kamajors in one of chiefdoms, he joined Kabbah’s cabinet as the Deputy Minister of Defence and the Minister of Internal Affairs, and provided support to the Kamajors throughout Sierra Leone. As a result, he came to be regarded as the leader who succeeded in bringing all the Kamajors together, and after the CDF was established he was named its National Coordinator. The second defendant, Allieu Kondewa, made his name as an initiator during the civil war and from 1997 he acted as the ‘high priest’ of the CDF. The third defendant, Moinina Fofana, rose to prominence in 1997 as the CDF’s director of war.

Photograph 2-1: Samuel Hinga Norman



(From *the Standard Times*)

Photograph 2-2: Allieu Kondewa



(Provided by Danny Hoffman)

Photograph 2-3: Moinina Fofana



(From the SCSL website)

The very fact that they were prosecuted by the Special Court of Sierra Leone demonstrates that these three figures played central roles within the CDF.²⁴ This book aims to present an overall perspective of the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF by examining how these three men rose to such high positions in the CDF.

Level Two: How Individual Commanders Built Their Own PC Networks

The problem which just examining the first level is that it is too vast to explore human relationships in detail. Even if we can get an overall view of the changes in the Kamajors/CDF, we can still not adequately confirm how the human networks functioned. It is therefore a good idea to examine a part of the Kamajors/CDF which was small enough in size for the members to know each other. I chose a unit which had around no more than 300 men in it even at its peak, thus making it the appropriate size for investigating its network of interpersonal relationships in detail.

The fieldwork for this second level was made possible with the cooperation of an ex-commander. This commander whose 'jungle name' was Sparrow introduced me to many people, including the commanders above him and also some of the men who were under him. I was able to learn about the PC network he headed right down to its very tips, and I also got a chance to make contact with his commanders. The unit was part of the CDF; in other words, this unit is a PC network within a larger PC network that comprised the CDF. By looking at how this PC network was managed, I examine in detail how PC networks in the Kamajors/CDF functioned in micro level.

Sparrow himself became quite a high-ranking patron within the CDF network as he rose up to a position of leadership. Bringing to light his experiences as a commander at the very top will teach us about the role of the patron.²⁵ How did he obtain that position? How did he procure resources, and how did he distribute them? How did he find personnel? How was he drawn into the power struggle and how did he survive it? The role of a CDF patron can be examined by discussing these issues.

Moreover, listening to the experiences of the fighters under Sparrow allows us to see how they were dependent on their patron, and how they chose him.

6. Structure of the Book

This book views the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF as a process in which separate PC networks were eventually brought together. To best elucidate this process, the book has adopted the following structure.

First, Chapter 3 outlines the research methods during the fieldwork and the method of description used in this book. Next, Chapter 4 presents background information that is necessary for understanding the Kamajors/CDF. In addition to looking at the causes of the civil war, it presents an outline of the administrative districts that formed the base for the organisation of the Kamajors and an overview of the Islamic intellectuals and witch doctors who became initiators.

Chapters 5 through 10 describe the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF. The hypothesis of this book suggests a straightforward process by which the Kamajors converged into the CDF. However, the process was not that simple as it actually includes many twists and turns and obstacles that had to be overcome. These chapters include a description of the complicated process of the transformation.

Chapter 5 reiterates the course of events from the Momoh regime when the civil war began to the first half of the NPRC administration (March 1991 to 1994). This period can be regarded as a time that preceded the appearance of the Kamajors. Faced with an invasion by the RUF, the Momoh regime enacted a number of policies to deal with the threat. These included a troop increase in the Sierra Leone Army, requests for foreign support, arming displaced persons from neighbouring Liberia and mobilising local residents to combat the invaders. During the NPRC regime, this last measure was carried out in a more organised manner than during Momoh's rule.

Chapter 6 looks at operations during the middle and end of the NPRC regime (1994 to March 1996). In particular, this chapter verifies the process through which small scale PC networks were created on a local level. It was during this time that the RUF switched to guerrilla warfare tactics. To counter that, local residents sought to protect themselves, and hunter militias began to form in several chiefdoms.

Chapter 7 looks at developments during the first Kabbah administration (March 1996 to May 1997). It was during this time that initiation rites spread throughout the Mende land, and the hunter militias began to be generally called 'Kamajors'. The Kamajors started to link up with each other beyond the boundaries of the chiefdoms, and several major factions emerged. The chapter focuses on the process through which separate PC networks gradually joined together.

Chapters 8 and 9 follow the process during the AFRC regime. As a result of the coup d'état in May 1997 (known simply as 'May Twenty Five'), President Kabbah sought asylum in Guinea. In order to put an end to the civil war, the AFRC military junta formed a coalition

government with the RUF. The Kamajors fought back, declaring their goal to be the restoration of Kabbah's government.

First, Chapter 8 looks at one group of Kamajors that battled the AFRC/RUF from the border with Liberia. The Kamajors in question declared they were fighting for the return of democracy and the restoration of the Kabbah administration. Furthermore, they stressed cooperation with the hunter militias from other ethnic groups, and rather than describing themselves as 'Kamajors', a term which is strongly tied to the Mende people, they went by the name 'Civilian Defence Force' or just 'CDF'. Other Kamajors in different parts of Sierra Leone followed suit and a certain degree of coherence as a pro-government force fighting for the ousted Kabbah administration emerged. This chapter describes the process by which one PC network became dominant over other networks.

Chapter 9 focuses on the fight with the AFRC/RUF that took place deep in Sierra Leonean territory. It traces the process in which the Kamajor force described in Chapter 8 weakened and a new one emerged on top. The focus of the Kamajors/CDF's operations during this time switched to a group of Kamajors based in a town called Talia which is located in the hinterlands of Sierra Leone far from both major towns and national borders. Some of the people who were active in this Kamajor group emerged as leaders of the CDF after the return of President Kabbah.

Chapter 10 deals with the second Kabbah administration, specifically the course of events from his return to the end of the civil war (March 1998 to January 2002). After Kabbah's government took back power, the CDF set up offices in Freetown and other cities and took shape as a pro-government force. The organisation of the CDF was cemented in place as the Kamajor group described in Chapter 9 that was based in Talia made the other Kamajors dependent on it. This signifies the establishment of the single PC network of the CDF. However, this network, which had been constructed as a pro-government force, was dismantled when the civil war came to an end. This chapter identifies the process by which regional PC networks were brought under the control of a single dominant PC network, and how that network then dismantled upon the conclusion of hostilities.

This is how the process of the CDF's transformation is described between chapters 5 and 10. The second level of this account – namely how one of commanders, Sparrow, built up and managed his PC network – is intertwined with the description of the overall transformation of the Kamajors/CDF.

Chapter 11 provides a record of the life histories of several individuals. These will show that the combatants joined and left units over and over again, and that the PC networks of the Kamajors/CDF were fluid.

Chapter 12 is the conclusion. It begins by confirming that the hypothesis has indeed been verified and then presents a small amount of discussion. The insights gained by examining the metamorphosis of the Kamajors/CDF are not only effective for evaluating the hypothesis, as they also provide hints to help us reconsider the Sierra Leone civil war and conflicts in modern Africa. The study presented in this book critically examines the existing body of literature on the subject and adds new insights.

Research Methods

This chapter describes the research methods I used to examine the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF during my research and fieldwork.

1. Outline of the Fieldwork

Over the course of five years starting from 2007, I carried out an annual fieldwork study lasting between one to three months in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia. In total, I spent 174 days in the field, 112 of which were in Liberia and the remaining 62 in Sierra Leone. The reason why fieldworks in Liberia took longer was because I attempted to include the war in Liberia in my initial research plan. In the beginning, the goal of my research was to examine how the civil wars in the two neighbouring countries affected each other. I therefore focused my study on those Sierra Leoneans who had taken part in the civil wars of Liberia. Sparrow, the ex-commander who collaborated with my on-the-ground research, had also moved to Liberia after the Kamajors/CDF disbanded. As my research progressed, I decided that in order to unravel the complicated influences the two countries had on each other, I first had to concentrate my fieldwork on Sierra Leone. The result is this book. I hope to present the findings of my study into the Liberian civil wars at a later date.

2. Interview Methodology

This book reconstructs the changes in the Kamajors/CDF from oral testimonies and preceding literature. When referring to the oral testimonies, the terms ‘narrative’ or ‘testimony’ are used.

Most of the data I gathered during my fieldwork was from interviews. During the interviews, I listened to the life history of the

subject, beginning with where they were from and which ethnic group they belonged to, and covering topics like where they were born and raised,²⁶ and where they received their education. I listened to the stories of their lives right up to the moment in which I was interviewing them, including when and where they got caught up in the civil war. I would first declare to the interviewee, 'I have come to research the Sierra Leone civil war. I would like to hear the stories of the people who actually experienced it', then I would say to them, 'Please tell me about your experiences in life so far, especially during the civil war'. As the contents of the interviews sometimes touched on very sensitive matters, I did not use any recording equipment. All the narratives presented in this book are verbatim accounts of their conversations. I would listen to their stories while taking notes, then immediately after the interview finished, I would put the narrative into note form in a way that reflected the content and the subject's manner of speaking as faithfully as possible.

The subjects of the interviews were introduced to me either by those whom I had already interviewed or by people whom I became acquainted with during my stay.²⁷ In other words, I relied on the personal connections between interviewees to find new subjects. Furthermore, I sometimes asked interviewees to introduce people whose names had come up during the interview and who seemed to be important for understanding the Kamajors/CDF. It cannot be denied that to a certain extent my selection of interviewees was left to chance.

The main language used in the interviews was English. In Liberia, English (Liberian English) is used as the *lingua franca*, so the Sierra Leoneans living there use it in their daily lives. In Sierra Leone, I also used English on most occasions as Krio, the *lingua franca* of Sierra Leone, is close enough to English for Krio speakers to be able to understand it. I did not know enough Krio to be able to conduct interviews in it, but I gradually acquired some level of proficiency in the language over the course of my fieldwork. There were times when the interviewee only spoke Mende or Krio, and on these occasions, I interviewed them through an interpreter.

What is regrettable is that I wrote down my fieldnotes in Japanese. The original publication of this book is Japanese, and I did not have

the intention to publish in English at first. Most of the narratives were written down in Japanese. This book presents a lot of narratives, most of which are translated again from Japanese to English by the hands of translators. It is a disadvantage that this book cannot appropriately show the narratives of Sierra Leonean people.

3. The Two Types of Oral Sources and the Descriptive Method Used

The Two Types of Oral Sources

In this book, the information from oral accounts (narratives and testimony) gathered through my fieldwork is used for two purposes.

The first purpose is to learn the facts. The narratives and testimony presented by figures who played key roles in the civil war (politicians and high-ranking individuals in the Kamajors/CDF) are generally presented here with that purpose. In such cases, I have determined that the speaker is narrating events and experiences objectively.²⁸ However, there are also problems with oral sources, namely that memory is vague and mistakes are often made (Ito 2007: 9). Therefore, I verified whether the narrated facts were sound or not by comparing available written sources.²⁹

The second purpose is to show the subjectivity of the interviewee regardless of what the truth may be. Humans possess imagination and have individual thoughts and interpretations regarding their own behaviour. Therefore, their beliefs, ideals and even preconceptions of the world can be said to be part of reality. Consequently, in addition to describing the facts, it is necessary to include in that description how people experienced and perceived the events that actually happened. When using narratives for this purpose, one cannot adopt a position of looking at it as an objective description; rather, it should be regarded as a subjective reality constructed by the narrator's own values and motives (Sakurai 2002). Subjective realities are different from the facts. Therefore, some discrepancy between a subjective reality and the facts should be accepted.

In fact, I believe that such discrepancies make us understand the reality more deeply. Anthropologist, Lisa H. Malkki's work is one such examples. She carried out a study of Hutu refugees who had

been driven out of Burundi to Tanzania. During the course of her fieldwork, Malkki noticed that when they talked about the past, they all recounted the same sort of experiences. It was as if a formulaic (or patternised) narrative was being shared among them. The content of that narrative was that the Hutu were a people who had a history of being driven from Burundi and that one day they would build their own country (Malkki 1995).

Malkki saw this formularised narrative as a collective history constructed within a closed space (Malkki 1995: 241). A collective history does not necessarily align with the facts. The reason for this is that events in the past are talked about between people over and over again and among those people there will be some who add some sort of meaning to past events that has no relation to the facts. When the narrative is then retold again and again, it results in becoming formularised. Malkki states that this is how the collective histories were created among the Hutu refugees (Malkki 1995: 122–128).

One of the collective histories Malkki gave is as follows. When the Tanzanian government decided to impose the Development Levy, which should be collected from all adults in the country including the Hutu refugees, a narrative emerged among the Hutus that claimed that the Tanzanian government was beginning to exploit them now that international organisations had withdrawn, and that the Tanzanians looked down on them as peasants and were trying to make the Hutus work for them. This narrative became firmly planted among the displaced Hutus as a collective memory (Malkki 1995: 122–126). Collective memories like this are none other than a subjective reality. The narratives I heard during my fieldwork are more or less a reflection of this sort of phenomenon. People's subjectivity is a part of reality, and it is intricately linked with the facts (that is, events that actually happened).

This book discusses the birth and transformation of the Kamajors/CDF based on both objective facts and subjective realities relating to them. Some of accounts in this book include descriptions of events that are hard to believe as facts. For example, there are narratives from Kamajors who said they could repel bullets, or that there were people who survived by making themselves invisible. These accounts were not acceptable to me as objective facts (and are

probably not for the reader, either), but rather than reject their narratives as outright falsehoods, I tried in my own way to seek an explanation that more people, including both Kamajors and readers alike, could accept. My account given in this book is a result of what was thus ‘constructed’.

The Descriptive Method Used in This Book

This book records the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF as a single course of events, while also offering a simple interpretation for it. In recent years, there has been a tendency to emphasise the diversity and complexity of phenomena and write about them using elaborate writing with clichés such as ‘a detailed description is needed that sheds light on what is potentially lost or submerged in a clear-cut explanation’. In contrast, I have consciously added simple explanations for the phenomena described. It is possible that some may criticise the explanations for being too simple. However, there is a reason why I have chosen to do this. A written description is similar to using two dimensions (a flat surface) to portray three dimensional objects (solids). There is a limit to how far one can depict three dimensional items this way.³⁰ Therefore, instead of attempting to describe the various dimensions of a certain phenomenon in one go, the aim of this book is to first try and show just one dimension of it. If the reader is interested in the Sierra Leone civil war and looks at other books on it or undertakes fieldwork there, he or she should see that the account presented here is only one of many interpretations.

Another reason why this book does not aim for a ‘thick description’ is that there is a relatively large body of literature on the civil war already. The research has built up as simple interpretations are layered. Such accumulation as a whole consists of ‘thick description’ of the war in Sierra Leone. Richards, who produced the first academic book on the conflict, made the straightforward claim that the Sierra Leone civil war broke out as a result of young people being marginalised from society (Richards 1996). From this starting point, a body of research has accumulated as repeated arguments have been put forward against Richards’s assertion. The simpler an argument, the easier it is to dispute it. As the quantity of research

increased, with counterarguments drawing yet more counterarguments, our understanding of the civil war has deepened. I am well aware that this book is a part of this process. I have no desire to discuss the Kamajors/CDF alone by myself. Such a way of description is only permitted because there are other studies out there that more eloquently relate aspects of the conflict in Sierra Leone that I was unable to portray.

4. Sparrow: A Research Collaborator

As I proceeded with my research, Sparrow became a key provider of information. I first met him in July 2007. He came to talk to me as I was whiling away the time in a cheap guesthouse in Freetown. He said he had come from Liberia while he was assisting an American scholar with his fieldwork. As we exchanged pleasantries, he mentioned that he was a commander during the civil war. At the time, I was just there as a tourist, and had not yet made a decision as to whether to embark on a doctorate or not. So, I did not make any record of his story. I had simply come to Sierra Leone to look around after finishing my Master's thesis, which was on peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. In fact, I was unsure about my own future; should I try to continue in Academia, or should I go into the field of development aid? As the conversation came to an end, I exchanged email addresses with Sparrow and then left saying that I would contact him should I visit Sierra Leone again.

I met him again in August 2008. In the time since our first meeting, I had decided to aim for a career in research and had embarked on a doctoral course in Human Sciences at the Graduate School of Osaka University. After making contact with Sparrow again, I began some research among the Sierra Leonean community in the Liberian capital of Monrovia. From then on, he was a key collaborator in my investigation. I need to mention here that whenever Sparrow assisted with my research a financial transaction took place. When I went to Sierra Leone as part of my study, I asked him to accompany me as my assistant and paid him a wage and *per diem* allowance based on a contract.

Sparrow was from the Mende ethnic group, but he was raised in Liberia. His father moved from Kailahun District to the Liberian capital of Monrovia before the war. Therefore, Sparrow himself was born and raised in Monrovia, but in the latter half of the 1980s he went to Sierra Leone as his father wanted him to learn the Mende language, and received his secondary and higher education there. With the outbreak of the civil war in 1991, he returned to Liberia. At the time, Liberia was also embroiled in a civil war and Monrovia was divided by armed factions (*The First Liberian Civil War, 1989–96*). However, the fighting was sporadic, so Liberia was thought to be safer than Sierra Leone.

In 1997, while he was still living in Liberia, Sparrow became involved with the activities of the Kamajors/CDF. After the conclusion of the First Liberian Civil War, he gathered some Liberian fighters and joined the Kamajors/CDF. Then he began to live in Freetown as one of the cadres in the Kamajors/CDF. It was from around this time that he began to assist the research of one of the cultural anthropologists, who was studying the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. When the civil war in the former began to wind down, Sparrow joined Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), an anti-government force that was active in the second Liberian Civil War (2000–2003).

After this conflict ended, Sparrow returned to Monrovia, and began to run a local NGO. From this period, he began to work, using his connections through this anthropologist, as an assistant for American and European NGOs and scholars, and it was in this capacity that I met him for the first time.

My decision to write about Sparrow's experiences in this book was based on the fact that he had already been investigated by police in both Liberia and Sierra Leone for his actions during the civil wars and had not been indicted in either country. He also wanted to write a memoir of his life during the civil wars and get it published. He even entertained a hope that if I wrote down his story it might get published (though I did tell him that the chances of that were small). It was from this expectation that Sparrow allowed me to describe his experiences in this book.

As English is used as an official language in both Sierra Leone and Liberia, many people have written about their time during the civil wars in English. Over the course of my interviews, I met several people who said that they were writing their memoirs. Most of those records remain on their computers in the form of a Word file.

5. Key Sources

This book reconstructs the past by using information acquired through my interviews alongside documentary sources. There are three key documentary sources that I have relied on, and I have outlined each of them below.

Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The first source is the final report issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone (TRC), titled *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, which was published in 2004 (herein referred to as ‘TRC Report’). The TRC was a Sierra Leonean organisation established under the Lome Peace Accord, which was signed in July 1997. Its goal was to ‘create an impartial historical record of the violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone’, and its activities got under way in earnest in 2002. The commission interviewed over 1,000 people, and in 2004 it published its final report, including its own interpretations for the war (TRC 1 2004: 24).

The report is the most detailed of all the sources that trace the overarching history and course of the civil war. The account it provides is also one that is relatively trustworthy.³¹ In particular, with regard to development within the key organisations that played a part in the civil war, such as the central government or RUF, it gave an account of the decision-making by individuals within each organisation. For the actions of the political elites, including the president, the leadership of the SLA, and the commanders of the various armed groups, it is the most reliable source there is.

Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002

The second major source is *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002*, edited by Alison L. Smith (Smith et al. 2004). Hereinafter it is referred to as *Conflict Mapping* in this book, and when quoting from it, the authorship is written as ‘Smith et al. 2004’.

Conflict Mapping was compiled by a non-profit organisation called No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ). It was established with the aim of engaging ‘in activities to promote public awareness on the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as to pressure Parliaments, Governments and other decision-making bodies with the aim of accelerating the entry into force of the first permanent international jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide’ (Smith et al. 2004: 1).³² The Conflict Mapping Program was a project undertaken by NPWJ to reconstruct ‘the chain of events during the ten-year war [the civil war of Sierra Leone] through the scrupulous selection and debriefing of key individuals throughout the country whose profession, role in their community or in the forces involved in the conflict, placed them in a position to follow events as they unfolded’ (Smith et al. 2004: iii). *Conflict Mapping* is the result of its efforts. Dividing Sierra Leone by its districts, the report compiled cases where international humanitarian law had been violated in each one. NPWJ employed 136 Sierra Leoneans, and after they had received training in how to carry out interview surveys, they went to almost every chiefdom and spoke with 400 people who were familiar with matters in that particular area (they carried out surveys in 146 chiefdoms out of a total of 149).

The key feature of the *Conflict Mapping* report is that it provides a detailed timeline of how individual units in each armed faction acted on a particular date. It allows us to learn about the specific behaviour of each unit and their interactions with civilians, and it is therefore of enormous value for showing what happened during the war at a local level.

Transcripts of the Special Court for Sierra Leone

The third source is the court record from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). The SCSL was a temporal court invested with the power to 'prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone' ('Agreement' 2002). Several people from the CDF, RUF, and AFRC were indicted, as was the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, for he was alleged to have had a deep involvement in the Sierra Leonean civil war. After all its public trials were over, the SCSL closed in December 2013.

The court records of the SCSL have been published on the Internet and the transcripts of all the trials are available. As noted above, from the CDF, Samuel Hinga Norman, Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana were prosecuted. During the trial, they testified along with other individuals who had been closely connected to them. By the very nature of a trial, the impartiality of the evidence cannot be guaranteed, whether it comes from the defence or prosecution. Nevertheless, it can be said that the evidence presented is a valid source for learning about the conditions and situation during the civil war. When using court transcripts in this book, they are referenced in the following way: (SCSL date: page number).

* * *

In this chapter, I have presented the methods and techniques used for this book. The following chapter (Chapter 4) provides further background information necessary to understand the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF.

Historical Background

This chapter presents three historical issues that will give the reader a clearer understanding of what the Kamajors/CDF were. First, Section 1 looks closer at the chieftaincy system which served as the foundation for the formation of the Kamajors as a political entity. Next, Section 2 covers the belief system of the Mende people, which will allow for a better understanding of the magical/superstitious aspect of the Kamajors. Finally, Section 3 addresses the political, economic and societal changes that occurred in Sierra Leone during the decade preceding the onset of civil war, and in doing so, illuminates the conditions that led to the war.

1. The Chiefdoms: Mobilising the Kamajors

The Kamajors were born out of chiefdom-based vigilantes that arose during the civil war. Therefore, it is necessary to have a closer look at the chiefdoms in Sierra Leone to understand Kamajors.

Outline of the Chieftaincy System in Sierra Leone after Independence

Chiefdoms are a form of administrative division of Sierra Leone which are below districts. Map 0-3 in the opening section of the book shows a map of Sierra Leone with the borders of the chiefdoms added, except for the western area (which contains the capital and surrounding areas). At the time this text was written in 2014, there were 149 chiefdoms in place across the country.

There are no chiefdoms in the western area, which is the former crown colony of the United Kingdom. The former crown colony was ruled by a colonial administration headed by a British governor dispatched from the United Kingdom. In comparison, the areas divided into chiefdoms (all regions of modern Sierra Leone except the western area) were former protectorate which was administered by 'indirect rule' (Mamdani 1996; Manning 2009). Indirect rule was a form of governance through which the colonial power would appoint powerful local figures to the position of chief, at which point the

chiefs would govern their region based on customary law (social norms and customs which were regarded as a legal framework) (Ochiai 2007). Since the chieftaincy system has been maintained as administrative system in independent Sierra Leone, chiefs still perform the roles of local leaders as well as official administrator in present days.

The chiefdoms are governed by chiefs who are placed in a three-rank hierarchy. The highest ranking figure in a chiefdom is known as 'paramount chief'. The position is restricted to a limited number of families living within the chiefdom (The position is not an inherited one limited to one family). These families are known as the 'ruling houses' or 'royal families' of the chiefdom. Paramount chiefs hold their position until death, and when one paramount chief dies, a new one is selected from among the ruling houses.

The second rank of administrators is filled by those known as 'section chiefs' and 'town chiefs'. Section chiefs govern over sections, the next largest administrative division below the chiefdom, while town chiefs govern the principal towns in chiefdoms.

The lowest ranking administrators represent the villages scattered throughout the chiefdoms, and each is known as a headman. Headmen are often called 'village chiefs' by the people of Sierra Leone.

Paramount chiefs and section chiefs are served by advisors with the title of 'speaker'.³³ Speakers serve as second-in-command to the chiefs of the different ranks.

These positions were systematised in the Tribal Authorities Ordinance, No. 8 of 1937, and the obligations corresponding to those positions are laid out in law. After Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961, the chieftaincy system remained in place largely unchanged, and functioned as the administrative structure for local government in independent Sierra Leone (Ochiai 2007, 2008).

The ruling class of chiefdoms which consists of the abovementioned positions are called 'traditional authorities' in this book.

The Mende Land in the Precolonial Era

Let us now look at how the chieftaincy system was built. At the time the British built their Freetown colony (the current western area) in the early 19th century, the surrounding areas that came under indirect rule as protectorate afterwards, were a collection of small, native-governed states. In notes and records from the time, the British called these states ‘chiefdoms’ and ‘kingdoms’, and their rulers were known correspondingly as chiefs or kings.

The chiefdoms and chiefs in the pre-colonial era and colonial period should be distinguished. Chiefdoms in pre-colonial era are independent polities, while those in the colonial period mean administrative divisions under the chieftaincy system. The chieftaincy system was used to integrate the existing local leadership, namely chiefs, into an administrative form of the colonial government, in which local leaders were appointed as ‘paramount chiefs’ and their territories were turned into administrative unit of ‘chiefdom’. From this point on in the text, those lands ruled by local chiefs and kings before coming under colonial rule will be called the pre-colonial chiefdoms, while the administrative divisions that made up the system legalised in the 1937 Tribal Authorities Ordinance No. 8 will be called simply chiefdoms in order to differentiate between the two.³⁴

None of the explanation above is meant to imply that there was a coherent system of governance in place in the pre-colonial chiefdoms of Sierra Leone. According to Arthur Abraham, who has written on the history of the Mende people, the pre-colonial Mende chiefdoms of the 19th century could be broadly classified into one of the following two types: First were the states ruled by chiefs whose power was based in their own individual authority. In those states, the chiefs were in charge of decision making, and they often waged battle with other chiefdoms in order to gain control over greater areas. All of the power was in the hands of the chiefs who ruled over this type of pre-colonial chiefdom.

There were also chiefdoms over which the highest ranking of chiefs in charge did not wield absolute power. One European record from the late 19th century stated that, within a certain chiefdom, in terms of the actual exercise of day-to-day administrative authority

‘the kings wielded power almost equal to that of their chiefs [under him]’ (Laborde 1880, cited in Abraham 1978: 37). In this type of chieftdom, a highest chief (or ‘king’ in the referred record) were selected to serve as representatives of the overall state, but the actual power remained with the lower ranking chiefs of the various areas within the state. Those lower chiefs maintained independent control of their own regions (Abraham 1978: 33, 35). When the chief died, all of the subordinate chiefs would come together to select a new paramount chief. Apparently, it was generally true that ‘almost any influential person might take a bid for a Mendi chiefship’ and be selected to become paramount chief (Fenton 1933 cited in Abraham 1978: 36).

Pre-colonial chieftdoms repeatedly went to war with surrounding chieftdoms, but those chieftdoms were not necessarily separated by anything resembling clear ‘national borders’ at the time. Influence spread outwards concentrically from the area over which the chiefs ruled, but this left areas between the chieftdoms over which no one held authority. Conflicts would begin when one chieftdom made to settle an area over which it had little influence and the surrounding chieftdoms would then fight to assert their own control over the region (Little 1967: 28). Wars were also fought over control of trade routes and trading centres.

In the late 19th century, the British colonial government began advancing outwards from its own directly controlled lands into the lands run by the independent chiefs (In this context, these areas are referred to below as the ‘hinterlands’ in order to distinguish them from the lands under the direct control of the colonial administration). The catalyst for the colonial advance came from the Krio who were living in the crown colony, a group that had already begun making inroads into the hinterland through trade and other means. Until the late 19th century, the Krio had built a large fortune in the colony region and had managed to secure a high quality of life for themselves. The people cultivated ginger, pepper and other seasonings for export. In addition, through the purchase of confiscated slave ships from the government, they were able to open trade routes to what is now Nigeria and to other coastal countries in West Africa. This all contributed to their being able to secure the

wealth they needed to establish a system of education and to adopt a lifestyle that was more 'westernized' (Pham 2005:13). Eventually, Krio missionaries and traders began venturing into the hinterlands, to spread their teachings and search for markets for their wares, respectively (Ochiai 2011a: 187). Krio traders who did expand into the hinterlands were able to supply the chiefdoms with items imported from Europe, however, they were also often the target of attacks to rob them of their goods. In order to protect the Krio, who as inhabitants of the colonial lands were considered British subjects by the crown, the colonial administration began to exert influence into the hinterlands. The administration had the chiefs promise they would stop the attacks and protect subjects of the British crown. The colonial government eventually signed written agreements with the chiefs of the different chiefdoms. These agreements were made between the chiefdoms and the British crown and so were considered to be official treaties. Laid out in the treaties were provisions forbidding the plunder of goods from subjects of the British crown and guarantees regarding the safety of subjects visiting the chiefdoms for the purpose of conducting trade.

For example, in 1891, the crown entered into a treaty with three chiefs of lands in Kpa Mende Country (Treaty 134). The treaty required three guarantees from the 'country' that signed: (1) the guarantee of free passage for British subjects travelling in Kpa Mende Country; (2) the abolishment of warlike actions that could be used to threaten the lives or property of British subjects; and (3) a guarantee to keep all trade routes open. In exchange, the chiefs were to receive a total sum of ten pounds stipend which was to be divided among the three chiefs (Great Britain 1892 cited in Reeck 1976:18).

Once the colonial government began to exert its influence over the hinterlands, some chiefs began to use the resources of the government to expand their own power. For example, a woman by the name of Madam Yoko was one of the chiefs in Kpa Mende Chiefdom. She authorised the Frontier-Police Force³⁵ to station in the lands under her control. The Frontier-Police Force was a unit under the control of the colonial administration that was organised for the purposes of maintaining public order in the hinterlands. She actively utilised the force to strengthen her position in relation to

other chiefs (Reeck 1976: 29–31). In addition, Sorie Kessebeh, chief of Lotifunk, managed to earn a good profit by maintaining the trade routes and trading with the Krio. When the colonial government went to war with other chiefdoms, Kessebeh sent out military forces to fight on the side of the colonial forces (Reeck 1976: 27–29).

Colonisation and the Introduction of the Chieftaincy System

On 31 August 1896, the colonial administration issued a proclamation that declared the hinterlands would henceforth be a British Protectorate. This proclamation was to place the local chiefs under the rule of the administration. In this way, an indirect system of government was established in the protectorate region, through which local leaders collected taxes and conducted other public business under the supervision of a few officials dispatched by the colonial administration (Ochiai and Kaneda 2008).³⁶ The three ranks of paramount chief, section chief and headman were all established at this time, and there was a total of 216 paramount chiefs appointed when the protectorate was established. This information allows us to presume that there was approximately the same number of chiefdoms in place during this period (Ochiai 2007:21).

The traditional authorities were responsible for collecting taxes and for providing arbitration in disputes over land or legal issues. The colonial government introduced a ‘hut tax’ in order to acquire the finances required to govern the protectorate, and the collection of that tax was undertaken by the paramount chief in charge of each chiefdom. In some of those chiefdoms, the paramount chiefs were authorised to levy a commission on collections and that amount was deducted from the total amount submitted to the colonial government. In addition to their tax collection duties, paramount chiefs were also authorised to adjudicate legal affairs. Their remit covered all but the most serious of crimes, and they were authorised to hear cases that fell under common law (Ochiai 2007).

However, when the protectorate was formed, not all of the chiefs were brought under the governance of the colonial government. In fact, the declaration announcing the protectorate was not made with the consensus of chiefs that ruled in the hinterlands. Therefore, even after the announcement of the annexation of the lands that would

become the protectorate, the colonial government was required to continue to put great effort into bringing the chiefs into the political system (Reeck 1976: 37). Monetary incentives were offered to chiefs in order to integrate them into the political framework. Such incentives included the previously mentioned authorisation for paramount chiefs to deduct a commission from taxes collected, and they also included the provision of a salary paid by the colonial government. In addition, paramount chiefs could be paid a per diem allowance whenever they were required to leave their own chiefdom, and they would also be given gifts. These sorts of financial incentives helped gradually bring the chiefs under the rule of the colonial government (Kilson 1969:25–26).

In the process of bringing the chiefs into its system of indirect administration, the colonial government appointed paramount chiefs and authorised the establishment of the title as a hereditary one. This, in effect, fixed the position of specific families from which a paramount chief could rise to the position. Thus, ruling families were established during the colonial rule.

The colonial government used financial incentives to incorporate the chiefs under their indirect rule. In this process, they integrated chiefs into the system of indirect rule by using financial incentives. This can be understood as having the established the colonial government in the patron role in the national-level PC network. The aspects of the neo-patrimonial state found in Sierra Leone after independence originated in the administrative system centred on the PC network established by the colonial government (Clapham 1972; Labonte 2012; Leonard et al. 2009; Reno 1995b, 1998).

Traditional Authority and the Rise of the SLPP

Around the time Sierra Leone earned its independence, the paramount chiefs of the Mende people began to build close relationships with the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP).

The inhabitants of the lands of the protectorate had gradually been brought under the rule of the colonial government. When the government introduced the primary school education system at the beginning of the 20th century, schooling was mainly offered in the Mende land, so the Mende people were the first to receive a western

education. The reason for primary school education being introduced mainly in the Mende land was because the spread of Islam was not as extensive there as it had been in the northern region of the country, so officials expected that it would be easier to propagate the Christian religion (In fact, many people converted to Christianity in the south, where the educational system had spread). The first primary school founded by the colonial government was built in 1906 in the city of Bo (located in Mende land), which is known as the Bo School. The entrance requirement of this school was to be the son of a chief or to have received a chief's recommendation. New schools continued to be built until 1938, and 80 per cent of those schools were built in the Mende land (Kilson 1969: 77).

Sierra Leone achieved its independence in 1961 and in the run up to independence authority was transferred to the native population. The Mende dispatched a large number of representatives to the colonial government.

Many of those active in Sierra Leonean politics around the time of independence were individuals who had received a primary school education and were then employed in the modern sector. After learning to read and write in educational institutions located in the hinterland, people essentially had two paths they could take: either return to the chieftdom of their birth and become part of the traditional authority, or enter the modern sector, at which point they would join the colonial administration or gain employment at a European-owned company. According to data gathered in 1934, 22 percent of Bo School graduates were employed by the colonial administration, while 15 percent gained jobs within the chieftaincy system (Kilson 1969: 79).

Before independence, the governmental stage upon which these individuals played their roles was the legislative council, which was a legislative body of the colonial government.³⁷ The political conflict between the Krio in the crown colony and the native inhabitants of the protectorate was evident there. The aim of Sierra Leonean natives living in the protectorate – i.e. non-crown colony lands under the control of the colonial government – was to improve their status. The Krio, on the other hand, had a lower population compared to native inhabitants. They remained conscious of the danger the native

population posed to them and thus tried to prevent the natives from being granted even more expanded rights. This is the environment in which the educated Mende came to stand as representatives of the native population.

The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) is a political party formed in 1951 to represent the native people of the country. This was the year the country's Constitution was enacted in anticipation of future independence, and the SLPP was supported by the paramount chiefs and the other ruling families. Individuals who attended educational institutions such as the Bo School established the relationships in the political party with the paramount chiefs and their ruling families (Clapham 1972: 29).

The 1951 Constitution established the country's parliament and a general election aimed at independence was held in 1957. Eligibility to vote in the election was subject to certain conditions: voters were required to be able to read and to own assets that equalled a certain value. Therefore, if a candidate were able to win over a paramount chief, they could earn the votes of that chiefdom. The leader of the SLPP at the time was Sir Milton Margai, and in order to enlist the support of the paramount chiefs, he offered them various inducements. For example, he provided certain individuals with benefits in the elections of paramount chiefs. In addition, he granted seats on the bench of the courts of justice in the chiefdoms to certain individuals. Furthermore, he is also known to have given preferential treatment during border conflicts between chiefdoms (Clapham 1982: 85–86).

The SLPP won the support of the paramount chiefs through the provision of various conveniences and, in doing so, replaced the positions of the upper echelon of the patron–client network. During the colonial period the officials of the colonial government worked as patrons of paramount chiefs. These officials were replaced by politicians of the SLPP. It means that the positions of the patrons were handed over to Sierra Leoneans. This was how the SLPP built a patron–client network of members who would vote for them, and that success led to the party winning the majority of votes in the 1957 election and allowing them to form a government. SLPP leader

Milton Margai was named prime minister and he led the country to its independence in 1961.

The SLPP, who had consolidated its power through earning the support of the native population, came to be seen as the ‘Mende party’ after the independence of the country. During the pre-independence period, political conflicts lay between the Krio and the native population. Due to the smallness of the Krio population, the SLPP could gain victory during the period of independence. The minority Krio no longer had the political influence to sway governmental policy they once had. Then, the political conflicts between native-born politicians expanded. This conflict led people to see the SLPP as Mende dominated.

The person who created this opportunity was Siaka Stevens, a man who would later rise to become the country’s president. Stevens was a representative of the United Mineworkers’ Union before he entered politics, and he was appointed to a seat in the Protectorate Assembly established in 1946. He also was a member of the SLPP when it was first formed in 1951 and was elected to the legislative council in the election of that same year. The following year he was appointed Minister of Mines, Land and Labour. However, when he was defeated in the election of 1957, losing his seat and ministerial position, he withdrew from the SLPP.

Stevens argued that another election should be held before independence and, in 1960, he founded a new political party called the All People’s Congress (APC). However, the SLPP continued to serve as ruling party and Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961 (TRC 3A 2004: 18).

The dominance of the Mende within the SLPP – the ‘Mende Party’ – was fortified through the political conflict between the SLPP and the APC. The APC’s base of support lay with urban workers, and it criticised the SLPP as being autocratic because its political support came from the paramount chiefs. In 1964, as this conflict between the parties continued, SLPP leader Milton Margai passed away. His half-brother, Sir Albert Margai, was selected to be his successor and he brought in a number of Mende to serve his administration. The APC denounced the SLPP as being controlled by the Mende, and thereby gained the support of numerous ethnic

groups in the north of the country.³⁸ Stevens advocated for solidarity between the Limba, Temne, Kono and other ethnic groups in the northern province, and since the APC was able to secure the support of the northern ethnicities, the SLPP was left with only the support of the Mende. This further strengthened its image as the ‘Mende party’.

The SLPP lost the 1967 election to the APC and with the APC’s placement as the country’s ruling party, Siaka Stevens was designated Sierra Leone’s prime minister. Stevens would later transform Sierra Leone into a one-party state, establishing it as such through the 1978 Constitution which designated the APC as the only legal party in Sierra Leone and thereby consolidating Stevens’s power. The 1978 Constitution also dismantled the SLPP (cf. Gberie 2005: 23–24).

The SLPP was revived in the process of democratisation during the 1990s. Even after its restoration, it is still seen as the party of the Mende, with its support primarily coming from the ruling Mende families in the Mende land. The SLPP under Ahmad Kabbah utilised the Kamajors during the civil war. This was based in the aforementioned relationship between the Mende paramount chiefs and the SLPP.

The Tyrannical Nature of the Traditional Authorities

After independence, the hinterland was left out of the country’s affairs and the paramount chiefs became sovereign leaders of their own chiefdoms. Previous researches have suggested that a new form of patrimonial national system became stronger under Stevens’s governance (Clapham 1972; Gberie 2005: 29; Reno 1995b). Within the process in which Stevens consolidated his power in the capital, rural areas were marginalised in their access to power. Areas that weren’t allowed to share in Stevens’s allotment of resources were unable to improve infrastructure and unable to maintain the infrastructure already in place. With access to the outside world restricted there were regular shortages of food and other daily necessities. Even after independence, local administrative bodies that had existed since the colonial period were unable to secure what they needed to properly function and ended being abandoned or taking on different forms (Ochiai 2007).

Abandoned by the central government, the traditional authorities in the rural chiefdoms ended up falling under what has been called 'decentralised despotism' (cf. Mamdani 1996). The traditional authorities and those related to them by marriage ruled the people under them, keeping firm control of the land (Manning 2009). That tyranny by the ruling authorities became an issue in rural areas of the country in the 1970s and 1980s. They made unjust demands for labour and tribute from the general population, diverting tax money and development funding marked for the chiefdom for their own personal use, levied unfair penalties upon innocent people and then stole the money for themselves, and abused public posts through widespread acceptance of bribes (Ochiai 2007: 125).

Anthropologist Paul Richards has stated that the tyrannical rule of the traditional authorities was one factor that led to the outbreak of the civil war, with many of the young people who were being exploited joining the RUF. Richards conducted oral interviews with RUF combatants and responses included: 'I ran away from my village because I refused to work for the chief, then was given a heavy fine I couldn't pay' and 'I was forced to marry someone, then they demanded an unfair bride price' (Richards 2005).

There are objections to Richards's opinion, however. First, the 'hunter militia' (or possibly Kamajors) were formed out of the traditional authorities, which tells us that local people recognised paramount chiefs as legitimate leaders of their chiefdoms. Prior research has shown that there was some arbitrariness in the wielding of power, but there is an argument that the paramount chiefs, section chiefs, headmen and others in that upper class were accepted by the populace as leaders (Fanthorp 2005; Manning 2009; Sawyer 2008). In particular, Fanthorp suggests that not necessarily all of those in traditional positions of power wielded their authority in a tyrannical way. Under the APC government, the central government applied pressure in selection of the paramount chiefs. In addition, there were cases when outsiders were appointed by the central government to serve in the roles of paramount chiefs (They were known as 'regent chiefs' and they weren't required to be descendants of the ruling families). Fanthorp states that these figures were the ones who used their authority in a despotic way (Fanthorp 2005). If that is the case,

it is not necessarily true that the paramount chiefs targeted the populace for exploitation.

Summary

In the sections above, we discussed the chieftaincy system and how it was formed. We can summarise the preceding points in the following way.

First, the paramount chiefs are both heads of administrative units of chiefdoms and traditional leaders. The position of paramount chief is hereditary, and the families from which paramount chiefs could be appointed can be called the 'ruling houses' or 'royal families'. The paramount chiefs and their lower ranks of chiefs make up the ruling class of the chiefdoms, which can be labelled the 'traditional authorities'. Since the chieftaincy system was kept in independent Sierra Leone, paramount chiefs maintain their positions as official heads of administrative unit.

Second, patrimonial system was established in the process which the colonial government established the chieftaincy system. The colonial administration appointed local leaders of protectorates to serve as paramount chiefs and, in doing so, Sierra Leone's national system acquired a neo-patrimonial aspect. The colonial government was able to incorporate paramount chiefs in the protectorate under the umbrella of colonial rule by distributing financial incentives. This practice of 'incentivised governmental rule' which continued after the independence can be regarded as the origin of the patrimonial rule.

Third, those who were born to the royal families received a westernised education and became politicians, gaining power through the political strife seen in the central government around the time of independence. In order to earn voting support, they channelled incentives to others in the royal families and, in this way, they were able to redefine the positions of power in the patron–client network of Sierra Leone. In the colonial period, the power was held in the hands of colonial government officials, but that power was transferred to the hands of local politicians in the central government within the process of preparing the independence.

Fourth, after the independence, the hinterland was marginalised and those regions unsupervised by the government were subjected to

more arbitrary rule under the traditional authorities. The chiefdoms were controlled by the royal families and those families related to the royal families by marriage. Some inhabitants, without the protection of the government, were subjected to unfair treatment at the hand of those rulers, and this situation continued until the outbreak of civil war in the 1990s. One theory suggests that many individuals joined the RUF as they were unable to remain in their own villages due to exploitation on the part of the traditional authorities.

Fifth, the Kamajors supported the Kabbah administration because of the strong relationship between the SLPP and the Mende paramount chiefs (Kabbah was head of the SLPP). That relationship had been built around the time of independence, with the SLPP having been established before independence with the paramount chiefs as their base of support. That base of support was later limited to only the Mende people due to various political struggles between the indigenous peoples of the country. The SLPP was revived during the democratisation process of the 1990s, but their support was still limited to that provided by the ruling families of the Mende.

2. The Magical Aspects of the Kamajors

In this section, we discuss the faith of the Mende people and how it served as support for the magical aspects of Kamajors. The organisation of the Kamajors and their initiation rituals were devised by a group of herbalists and Islamic intellectuals, who then played the roles of initiators during those rituals. This section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the Kamajors and their initiators through learning more about the herbalists, the Islamic intellectuals, and the faith in Mende society.

Indigenous Mende Faith

The initiation rites of the Kamajors were said to have been conducted in order to draw out a supernatural power called *hale*. *Hale* is supernatural/spiritual in nature, but it does not necessarily always refer only to superpowers like the ability of bullet-proofing or the ability to disappear. *Hale* also refers to those strengths required in

daily life, e.g. the abilities needed to properly utilise a knife or hatchet. In other words, *bale* is used by all people.

The creator god, Ngewo, is said to have created the *bale* power, alongside humans, animals and plants. However, Ngewo does not live on Earth anymore because he has retired to the heavens, high in the sky. At the moment he rose up into the sky, Ngewo left this hidden power called *bale*, and any person can make use of that power. However, it requires skill to be able to harness and control that power (Little 1967: 217–218; Reeck 1972: 184).

Hale is ubiquitous on Earth, but it cannot be extracted for use in its natural form; users must utilise a spirit (or *ngafa*) as a mediator when manipulating *bale* (Little 1967: 219). *Ngafa* comes in multiple forms. Little has classified those different forms of the *ngafa* of the Mende people in terms of their characteristics (Little 1967: 216–239). The first takes the form of the Mende's ancestral spirits, who are those spirits belonging to deceased relatives from about two generations back. The ancestral spirits are believed to still inhabit the areas in which they lived before death, and they are also said to be able to make contact with the living through dreams (Harris and Sawyerr 1968:15; Little 1967: 220). The second form of *ngafa* is described as the *genii*, which are spirits that are a part of nature. They are thought to live in rivers and in the bush, and to have their own personalities complete with emotions, likes and dislikes. They are said to come in various sizes, from tiny spirits to colossal spectres (Little 1967: 221). The ancestral spirits and the *genii* often appear in tales related to the Kamajors.

Herbalists

Herbalists are considered to be skilled at handling *bale*, and their roles are based in the foretelling of events and treatment of illness. When someone in a family becomes ill, they consult with a herbalist to determine the cause of the illness and to receive a regimen for treating the illness.³⁹ In addition, people are said to report mysterious events to the herbalists to ask them to interpret them and make a prediction. For example, if someone is eating lunch in a field and sees a chameleon fall nearby, he or she may visit a herbalist to determine the underlying meaning of the incident. Herbalists are also consulted

to interpret the meanings of dreams, e.g. one in which a family member is sick and a person is visited in a dream by an ancestor. Herbalists handle such requests and perform ceremonies when necessary (Harris and Sawyerr 1968: 55–57).

Herbalists are also said to interpret their own dreams and attribute meaning to them. When someone in a village falls ill or a village faces an issue of some sort, some people believed that dreams of herbalists could show the future or tell the village how to approach the issue being faced. As the herbalists were seen to hold this power within, many of them are said to have exerted a powerful influence on their communities (Little 1967: 228–230).

In order to draw out the *bale*, herbalists would make use of witchcraft. Such items included medicinal herbs, cowry shells, razors, ribbons, tallow, people's nails and more. The knowledge of the herbalists was sometimes kept within a family and passed down from father to child, and sometimes it passed down to others training as apprentice herbalists (Little 1967: 229, 234–235).

Some initiators who were responsible for initiating the Kamajors during the civil war have their origin in herbalists.

Islamic Intellectuals within the Mende Faith System

It was not only the herbalists who were responsible for the emergence of the Kamajors; Islamic intellectuals also played a hand in it. The reason for that is that the Islamic intellectuals were also thought to be able to control the power of the *bale*. How did the Islamic intellectuals become connected to the Mende belief system? In order to understand that, one must understand how the religion of Islam spread throughout West Africa. The religion was propagated through the region through the Muslim merchant trade network, and was established in West Africa after becoming interwoven with many of the traditional religions already in place.

The driving force behind the spread of Islam was an ethnic group of Muslim merchants called the Mandé (Sakai 2003; Takezawa 1988: 19).⁴⁰ Islam originally spread to West Africa through Trans-Saharan trade. An existing trade network has been confirmed to have been already in place by the 11th century. Muslim merchants brought salt and textiles from North Africa to exchange for the gold and kola nuts

from the lands on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. They flourished under the later Mali Empire (1230–1645) and Songhai Empire (1464–1590), which rose to control trade through holding control over the primary trade routes and cities along those routes. These regional powers protected trade and so were able to build trade networks that reached the West African interior (Sakai 2003).

The coastal kingdoms of West Africa began trading with Europeans after their arrival in the region in the 16th century. The regional powers were quite lax and recognised the autonomy of the chiefdoms/kingdoms under their control, so trade with the Europeans was accepted easily. Muslim merchants also began engaging in trade with the Europeans and the coast of West Africa was incorporated into the regional trade network, with the interior at the heart of that network. Europeans brought in metal products, and the Muslim merchants traded for gold, ivory, cotton products and other goods.

In the 17th century, the main ‘exports’ of West Africa switched from gold to slaves. This era saw the expansion of large-scale farms in the New World, aiming at growing products for the European market. A source of labour was needed to keep the farms operating. The demand for slaves from Africa rose (Miyamoto 1997: 257–259) and the Muslim merchants in West Africa got involved in the slave trade with European merchants. There was already a system of domestic slavery in place in West Africa at the time, in which the Muslim merchants already in active. Therefore, it was relatively easy to establish the link between slavery markets of Europeans and that of West African people. Muslim merchants sold slaves to the Europeans in the coastal regions.

When the Europeans entered the market, the demand for slaves rose in Africa. With that increased demand, the political structure of West Africa underwent a drastic transformation. Low and mid-level figures holding power in various regions began to set out to acquire slaves. One method by which they acquired slaves was to make war with neighbouring powers and capture enemy fighters. As a result of the entry of the local powers into the slave trade, the larger regional state frameworks broke down and a more chaotic array of smaller chiefdoms rose to take their place. In these smaller nations, the

fighters responsible for waging war played a role in acquiring financial profit. Subsequently, that warrior class came to have a more powerful influence and eventually, they rose to take positions of authority. In the 17th century, the chiefdoms began to appear, ruled by the warrior class (Sakai 2003: 100–101).

The Muslim merchants stood as intermediaries between these chiefdoms and the European slave traders. The chiefs handed over slaves to the Muslim merchants, who gave the chiefs guns, gunpowder and horses brought from Europe in return. The chiefs used the weapons and horses to increase their military strength, and thereby acquire even more slaves. At the same time, the Muslim merchants transported the slaves to the coast to sell on to the European slave traders. In addition to slaves, the Muslim merchants also sold gum arabic, beeswax, cowhide and grains (which were consumed on the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean) (Sakai 2003: 97).

The Muslim merchants invested the wealth gained through trade on quest for Islamic knowledge. While the majority of the Mandé people were engaged in the business of trade, a few operated Islamic schools utilising the profits gained through that trade. The traders provided financial support to the Islamic intellectuals, and the Islamic intellectuals provided spiritual guidelines to those members of the Muslim community. The Islamic intellectuals engaged themselves in research and interpretation of the Quran and Sharia law, in the creation of amulets and in performing auguries (cf. Sakai 2003: 130–140).

Islam served as a tool to strengthen the relationship between the warrior chiefs and the Muslim merchants. Islamic intellectuals from different areas moved around regularly to engage in exchange. Knowledge was passed down by individual teaching from mentor to student, and that promoted the movement of Islamic intellectuals. While travelling, the intellectuals joined the caravans formed by merchants (Sakai 2003: 139–141).

It was in this way that the Islamic intellectuals were able to reach the different chiefdoms/kingdoms, and upon their arrival, they managed to deepen their relationships with chiefdoms/kingdoms. The Islamic intellectuals were very knowledgeable about the outside

world, and they were able to advise the chiefs/kings regarding their policies.

Europeans records also show that the Islamic intellectuals served the chiefs as aides and report that they had influence as advisors and chancellors to the chiefs. They also created amulets for warriors and offered prayers for victory in battle.

The chiefs in each area looked upon the actions of the Islamic intellectuals as being performed in accordance with their own traditional system of faith, which led to Islam's intermixture with the traditional religions. The Muslim merchants and Islamic intellectuals had earned the trust of the local communities and came to build links to the local chiefs through marriage. This was how Mandé Islamic intellectuals came to settle in the different chiefdoms/kingdoms (Sakai 2003: 158–165).

A similar process led to the Islamisation of the Mende in eastern and southern Sierra Leone. First, by 1750, there were Muslim merchants and intellectuals from the Mandingo, Fula and Susu peoples living in a number of chiefdoms in northern Sierra Leone (Skinner 1976: 501). At the beginning of the 19th century, they began to make their way into the Mende land (in eastern and southern Sierra Leone).⁴¹ Those Islamic intellectuals that made inroads into the Mende chiefdoms were made aides, formed marital alliances and settled in those chiefdoms (Abraham 1978: 4; Bledsoe and Robey 1986; Reeck 1972: 186).

In Mende society, it was believed that the Arabic script used by Islamic intellectuals and Muslim merchants could be used to mediate the supernatural *hale* powers. There began to appear Islamic intellectuals who made use of Islam in a format that remained in line with the Mende belief system. In addition, native Mende people began to become Islamic intellectuals. In this way, Islam penetrated even Mende society by intermixing with the traditional native faith already in place.

There are two types of individual in Mende society who could be called Islamic intellectuals. First are the *karamoko*.⁴² The term '*karamoko*' refers to those individuals who operate Islamic schools and pass their knowledge on to their students (i.e. disciples). They are, in a sense, instructors at the Islamic schools. Students also live at the

schools and farm school lands and provide other labour. In addition, parents of students provide offerings to the schools (with students having to be over the age of five years old). *Karamoko* rely on these provisions for their livelihoods (Bledsoe and Robey 1986: 223, n. 5).

The second type of Islamic intellectual are called *morimen*.⁴³ *Morimen* make a living by performing magic and creating amulets. They are also said to provide prayer services for those looking for relationships or hoping for a good harvest, perform auguries, offer prayers for job-seekers and those wanting to pass exams, ward off evil and exorcise evil spirits (Bledsoe and Robey 1986: 208–209, 223, n. 5). Anthropologist, Peter Little reports that *morimen* prepare love potions and offer treatments for headaches. He also wrote that election candidates would have *morimen* make amulets for them in the hopes of guaranteeing their victorious rise to the position of chief (Little 1948).

Among the Kamajors initiators were many *karamoko* and *morimen*. In their name, the prefix of ‘*kamob*’ or ‘*moalem*’ were often attached. The term ‘*kamob*’ was used to refer to *karamoko*, while the term ‘*moalem*’ referred to the *morimen*.

Summary

The subjects discussed in this section can be summarised as follows. First, the Kamajor society was devised by the herbalists and Muslim intellectuals, and they played the roles of initiators in the Kamajors’ initiation rites. Second, herbalists among the Mende are thought to utilise a supernatural power called *bale* to foresee the future and provide medical treatment for disease. In addition, they have also made prophecies by interpreting dreams. Ancestral spirits and *genii* must serve as mediators in the obtaining of *bale*. Third, Islamic intellectuals were also seen as being able to manipulate *bale*. The term ‘*karamoko*’ refers to the teachers at Islamic schools, while ‘*morimen*’ refers to those who perform magic and create amulets to earn a living.

3. Conditions in Sierra Leone Directly before its Descent into Civil War

In this section, we discuss the situation in Sierra Leone before the outbreak of the civil war. In Section 4 of Chapter 2, we discussed how the shrinking of the PC network centred on the national government was one factor that led to the outbreak of the civil war. The understanding is that the young members of the educated class were unable to receive any benefit from the state and therefore were unsatisfied with the government and the anti-government organisation was formed (Richards 1996). How did that PC network end up shrinking in size? In other words, why was there a reduction in the amount of resources that the patrons in that network were able to distribute? In this section, we look for an answer to that question.

Siaka Stevens became Prime Minister of Sierra Leone in 1968 and consolidated one-party rule in the country under the APC.⁴⁴ In 1971, Sierra Leone became a Republic, and Stevens was made president. A new Constitution was enacted in 1978 that established Sierra Leone as a one-party state. In the background of these political events, Stevens was increasing his personal power through the distribution of resources through his PC network (Reno 1995b).

Stevens turned to Lebanese merchants in order to acquire the resources he needed (Reno 1995b). Lebanese people began immigrating to Sierra Leone in the 19th century when the domestic sericulture industry was stagnating. By engaging in trade with the lands within the protectorate, they managed to rise to a more economically advantageous position than the Krio who had arrived before them. The Lebanese people subsequently continued to keep a strong hold on the economy of Sierra Leone. In 1970, the total Lebanese population of Sierra Leone is estimated to be about 7,000 individuals (Gberie 2002; Kaniki 1973). Around the time Stevens became Prime Minister, the trade of diamonds produced in Sierra Leone was under the illegal control of those Lebanese merchants (Frost 2012: 60). Stevens accumulated a personal fortune through use of the Lebanese merchants, essentially by granting them the exclusive rights to mine diamonds in the country and by giving them a monopoly over the diamond market. He was provided compensation

in exchange for offering the merchants the mining rights and market monopoly and, in addition, Stevens also diverted national funds acquired through taxes levied on the diamonds and from other public organisations for his own use. His control of those funds provided Stevens with the means to distribute resources to powerful politicians and other clients in his network (Reno 1995b).

However, the harmonious relationship between the Lebanese merchants and Siaka Stevens began to break down. Once they had secured their own power, the Lebanese merchants felt that they no longer needed the protection from Stevens, and so began doing business in a way that the government could no longer interfere.⁴⁵ Those in control of the diamond monopoly circumvented government channels and started utilising their own channels to distribute their diamonds. With that development, Stevens's revenues declined, and he was no longer able to maintain the funding he needed to retain control. The presidency was subsequently passed on to Joseph Saidu Momoh, who took his post in 1985.

When Momoh took office as president, he attempted to secure his own source of income. He tried to return control of diamond distribution back to government channels and attempted to gain control of the revenue from bauxite and other resources. However, Momoh did not fare well in those attempts (Reno 1995b). Under Momoh's governance, the economic situation in Sierra Leone degraded and national revenues dropped, all of which led to national apparatuses beginning to show signs of malfunction. For example, in 1989, elementary school teaching staff received no salaries for twelve months, and schools in various areas began to close down as the teachers began strikes to obtain their pay (Richards 1996).

This situation was spurred on by the IMF-led structural adjustment programme (Reno 1996). Through the implementation of the structural adjustment programme, evaluation of the national currency of Sierra Leone – the leone – was shifted from a fixed exchange rate to a floating exchange rate. That resulted in rapid inflation. By defining the consumer index in the capital of Freetown as having been 100 in 1978, we find that the index had risen to 1516 by late 1986 and to 4743 in April of 1987. In addition, the rice subsidy

programme to provide city residents with the ability to cover living expenses was abolished in 1986 (Longhurst and Kamara 1988).

As a result of these events, the people of Sierra Leone were no longer able to live in the city to earn a living working for cash (Richards 1996: 51). Patrons who were helping to support their friends and relatives also began to have difficulties providing them with opportunities to receive an education or find employment. They were no longer able to protect their clients.

Commodity crop cultivation also stagnated in rural areas, and there were no means left by which to make a living – other than by remaining self-sufficient in the most basic of ways. Up until the early 1950s, Sierra Leone had been a net exporter of rice, but they became a net importer of rice in 1955 because producers were unable to meet domestic demand. The government encouraged the production of rice, but rice grown in Sierra Leone could not compete with cheaper rice imported into the country to make up for the domestic shortage. The volume of rice being imported continued to increase (Due and Karr 1973). This resulted in the domestic rice industry falling even further behind, which meant that farmers no longer produced more rice than they themselves would consume (Richards 1996: 51). As previously mentioned, Richards argues that young people joined the RUF because they were unable to remain in their own villages due to the tyrannical rule of the traditional authorities. However, it could also be said that the traditional authorities were also suffering from difficulties due to the downturn in the economy.

This is what Sierra Leone looked like in the run-up to the civil war; it was a country wracked by political, economic and social despair. The inescapable nature of the situation could be said to have led to the formation of the RUF. As Richards puts it, the RUF was formed after the educated class was excluded from the national-level PC network, and it drew in young men from the rural regions of the country. I even spoke to one Kamajor who looked back on that time and stated that, ‘Thinking about the situation at that time, it is quite understandable that the RUF started the rebellion’.

Discussions about the civil war in Sierra Leone often point out that Sierra Leone was on the lowest level of Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP). While it is true that Sierra Leone's HDI in 1991 was at the lowest level, that ranking was based upon data gathered before the civil war (UNDP 1991).

* * *

This chapter covered the historical background of Sierra Leone needed to gain a better understanding of the Kamajors and the CDF. Based on the information found here, the following chapters will show how the Kamajors and the CDF transformed over the course of time.

The Civil War before the Formation of the Kamajors: From the Momoh Administration to the First Half of the NPRC Administration (1991–1993)

This chapter marks the beginning of the main discussion – where we look at the chronological process through which the Kamajors/CDF was created and transformed. That said, we have to wait until 1994 for the formation of the Kamajors, as that was when the anti-government RUF changed its tactics to guerrilla warfare. To begin with, this chapter verifies the course of the civil war up to the creation of the Kamajors. In particular, it focuses mainly on phenomena and events that later affected the changes in the Kamajors. The period under discussion covers the Momoh Administration and the first part of the NPRC Administration (1991–93).

The first section gives an overview of the actions taken by the Sierra Leone government to increase its military strength as it faced the insurrection of the RUF. The second and third sections describe certain parts of that in more detail. In particular, Section 2 describes the mobilisation of Liberian refugees by the Sierra Leonean government, and Section 3 confirms the mobilisation of local people in the provinces by the Sierra Leone Army.

1. The Sierra Leone Government's Response to the Rebellion

In March 1991, there was an unknown attack along the Sierra Leonean border with Liberia. It was later discovered to be an uprising by the RUF. Even though refugees from within Sierra Leone continued to flood into the cities, there was still no one who was able to grasp what was happening.

As far as the Sierra Leone government was concerned, the RUF were an unknown element. It was unable to confirm the nature of the attack on the border. At the time, fighters from Liberia were making frequent incursions into Sierra Leone and it was thought that the incursion was another such attack by Liberian fighters. It was only when the RUF attacked the following month, in April, that it became

clear that the disorder in the border region was actually an armed uprising against the Sierra Leone government. Foday Sankoh released a statement that April through the BBC's news programme *Focus on Africa*. In the announcement, which came via a satellite telephone, it was stated that the goals of the uprising were the overthrow of the APC and the establishment of a fair, just and democratic society (Wai 2012: 95).

When the RUF made its attack, it borrowed personnel from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), an armed group in Liberia. Therefore, at the time the civil war began, the majority of combatants who incurred to Sierra Leone were Liberians. While the RUF made use of Liberian fighters, it took control of villages and towns along the border and increased its ranks by mobilising the inhabitants of captured settlements (Okano 2011b).

At the outbreak of the civil war, the military force available to the Sierra Leone government was limited and it was not able to deal with the insurrection. The Sierra Leone Army (SLA) had no more than 3,150 soldiers at the time. Furthermore, its role was largely formal and it had neither the equipment nor technology to put down a rebellion. In addition, the few soldiers who could cope with an actual battle scenario were out of the country; 377 troops had been sent to ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group), which was overseeing the ceasefire during the First Liberian Civil War (TRC 3A 2004: 146; Wai 2012: 95).

There were two other organisations besides the SLA that had military strength within the government. The first was the Special Security Division (SSD), which was an armed division of the Sierra Leone Police that had as many as 800 personnel. Within its ranks were some who had received military training in Cuba and Guinea, and militarily speaking it was superior to the SLA (Gberie 2005: 29).⁴⁶ The second was the coast guard, but this only had around 100 personnel. Even combined, these organisations were insufficient to suppress the rebellion and by July the Sierra Leone government was already in an inferior position to the RUF.

However, the government then took a number of measures and reasserted its superiority (Pham 2005: 83–85). First, it increased the number of troops in the SLA. By the end of 1991, its troop strength

numbered as many as 7,000. After the NPRC regime was established in April 1992 as a result of a coup, that figure rose even more. The NPRC implemented a further troop boost as it pledged that it would put an end to the civil war and revive affected areas. By mid-1992, the SLA's troop strength had swollen to around 14,000 (Pham 2005: 92–93).

Second, the government made a request for reinforcements to the governments of Guinea and Nigeria. In 1971, Sierra Leone and Guinea had signed a mutual defence agreement and as soon as the civil war started, the Guinean military dispatched soldiers to Sierra Leone under the terms of the agreement. The Guinean forces undertook the defence of Daru in Kailahun District. The Nigerian military, which was stationed in Sierra Leone for its deployment in Liberia as part of ECOMOG, also began to be used to suppress the uprising from July 1991 onwards (Pham 2005: 88).

Third, the Sierra Leone government armed refugees from Liberia. Since the outbreak of the First Liberian Civil War in 1989, Liberian refugees had been pouring into Sierra Leone. Many of them had experience of actual warfare as former members of the Liberian Army. The Sierra Leone government organised them as the Liberian United Defence Force (LUDF) and sent them to fight against the RUF.

Fourth, units of the SLA that were dispatched to the front line mobilised the local people. Knowledge of the area was necessary to do battle, so the frontline troops of the SLA used local residents who were familiar with the terrain as guides. These civilian guides gradually began to take part in the fighting as well.

As mentioned above, the government adopted various measures in order to combat the RUF. Of these, the arming of Liberian refugees and the mobilising of local residents on the front line come to play a significant role when discussing the metamorphosis of the Kamajors/CDF, which will be described in more detail in Sections 2 and 3 respectively.

2. The Mobilisation of Liberian Refugees

The Sierra Leone government formed a paramilitary organisation by mobilising Liberian refugees. The name is the LUDF. This group comprised not solely Liberians. There were also some Sierra Leoneans in it. This section shows that human networks that transcended the border were formed via the LUDF. Networks of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians were built up in the LUDF and they were later used when Liberian combatants were mobilised into the Kamajors/CDF (See Chapter 8).

The Formation of the LUDF and Its Development into ULIMO

The Sierra Leone government turned refugees from Liberia into combatants at a relatively early stage of the civil war. Liberian fighters were witnessed operating alongside the SLA as soon as 16 April 1991 (members of the Guinean armed forces were also said to be present) (TRC 3A 2004: 150).⁴⁷ That the Liberians were mobilised so quickly was down to the efforts of General Albert Karpheh, who was the Liberian ambassador to Sierra Leone.

Along with his career in the Liberian military, General Karpheh was part of the country's elite, having received military training in the USA and had also served as Minister of Defence (1981–82) and Chief-of-Staff (Majima n.d.). However, the Liberian government had been weakened by the first civil war (1989–1996) and by this time was just one of factions that controlled part of the capital, Monrovia. Many soldiers in the Liberian Army had fled to Sierra Leone and become refugees. When General Karpheh heard that Sierra Leone was facing a rebellion, he made an offer to the Sierra Leonean government to arm the refugees from Liberia and offer his support in the counter-insurgency efforts (Ellis 1999: 95).

General Karpheh took the lead in organising the LUDF. Arms, ammunition and military uniforms were supplied to the Liberian fighters in the LUDF⁴⁸ and a base for it was built in the village of Taoma on the outskirts of Kenema, called 'Taoma Base' (Ellis 1999: 95). I was able to hear their own stories from some Liberian refugees who were drafted into the LUDF. The following account is from a former soldier in the Liberian Army who crossed into Sierra Leone.

I was one of the first who made the Taoma Base. I came to Sierra Leone because I was forced out to the Sierra Leone border fighting with the NPFL. There were 21 of us then. We went over the border at Kongo into Sierra Leone and came as far as Daru. At that time, there were no refugee camps and the International Red Cross had no presence. The refugees were just living there. I moved to Zimmi and became a 'diamond boy' [diamond miner]. Around that time, the UN came, so I applied for asylum. I did this because if you apply for asylum you can get food rations every week. I just registered as a refugee, but I wasn't living in a refugee camp. I was living normally in Zimmi. But Zimmi was attacked by unidentified forces [Author's note: this was the beginning of the Sierra Leone civil war]. I fled with my friends to Kenema. It was there that I got drawn in to the 'military operation'. As I had some experience in the Liberian Army, I was caught up in the LUDF.⁴⁹

After that, he became a fighter for the LUDF. It can also be seen from his narrative that soldiers from the Liberian Army formed the core of the LUDF.

In exchange for organising the Liberian refugees, General Karpeh obtained military assistance from the Sierra Leonean government to fight back to Liberia. A plan had been formulated by Liberian politicians in Sierra Leone, led by Karpeh, to make a return to their home country at the head of a new faction. It is said that the Sierra Leone government also allowed for the LUDF to cross the border into Liberia. In May 1991, the LUDF united with a group of Liberian refugees in Guinea called the Movement for the Redemption of Liberian Moslems (MRM) to form the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO). That September, ULIMO crossed the border and invaded Liberia, thereby becoming another one of the armed groups involved in the First Liberian Civil War.

While ULIMO expanded its power in Liberian territory, it also continued to serve in the fight against the RUF on the soil of Sierra Leone. As an ULIMO combatant later testified, 'On the Sierra Leonean side we used the name LUDF, and in Liberia we went by

the name ULIMO'. The account below was taken from a former ULIMO fighter.

As a member of ULIMO, I invaded Liberia from Sierra Leone. I lived by spending a month or two on the front line [in Liberia] to serve in the fight with the NPFL, then returning to Sierra Leone. I would return to Sierra Leone to enjoy myself. I would go back there and enjoy shopping.⁵⁰

According to him, the Taoma base continued to be used even after ULIMO invaded Liberia. It was used not only as a base for the operation against the RUF in Sierra Leone, but also as a rear-base for supporting ULIMO's activities in Liberia.

Military training for Liberian fighters was also provided at the Taoma base. The following narrative was taken from a man who was forcefully conscripted in Liberia and became an ULIMO combatant after the ULIMO emerged as an armed faction.

My dad worked at a mine near the Sierra Leone-Liberian border [on the Liberian side], and I was living there. ULIMO turned up there. Around 35 teenagers were drafted into their army. I was one of them. After we were taken, we crossed the Liberian-Sierra Leone border on foot. After crossing the border, we were taken in ULIMO vehicles to the Taoma base. After that I was given some military training there for about a month. I was thoroughly trained so that I could give other fighters training.⁵¹

He was deliberately taken from Liberia to Sierra Leone and given military training there.

The ULIMO thus operated across borders. While, on the one hand, it cooperated with the government in Sierra Leone with its operations against the RUF, in Liberia it emerged as another armed faction.

Sierra Leoneans who joined the ULIMO

It was not only Liberian refugees who joined the ranks of the ULIMO; there were also some Sierra Leoneans. Many of the latter

chose the ULIMO as a place of refuge after being suspected of involvement with the RUF.

At the beginning of the civil war, the RUF had many Liberian fighters, so the SLA had doubts about any Sierra Leoneans who had relations with Liberians or Liberia of being a part of the rebel forces, and particular suspicion was cast on those living in border areas near Liberia. The following testimony comes from a trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

There are Mendes on this side [the side of Sierra Leone], there are also Mendes on that side [of the Liberian border]. And if you get closer to that border you realise that even the Sierra Leoneans use the Liberian currency very much because the distance to do business in Kenema [the closest city on the Sierra Leonean side of the border] is very far [the road is unpaved], so it's easy to do business in Monrovia [because the road is paved from the border to Monrovia]. So intermarriages occur between that borderline. So a lot of people speak Liberian English on the Sierra Leone side, likewise on the other side of Liberian border. So speaking Liberian English at that initial stage cannot identify whether this person is an NPFL or whether he is a Sierra Leonean that speaks Liberian English.⁵²

As recounted in this testimony, in the border region there were people who could be called either Liberian or Sierra Leonean. At one time they may have lived in Liberia and at another in Sierra Leone. The SLA thought that these people might well be collaborators with the RUF.

Sparrow, who assisted me in my fieldwork, was also a Sierra Leonean with deep ties to Liberia, even though he was not actually from the area along the border. Both of his parents were both Sierra Leoneans, but they were living in Monrovia and Sparrow was born and raised there. His father, who had a business in the Liberian capital, sent him to high school and university in Sierra Leone in order for him to learn Mende and make some contacts among the people there. He said that he joined the LUDF while he was a university student in the town of Bo in Sierra Leone, and the reason why he joined the

LUDF was because he was afraid of being suspected of being a member of the insurgency. In his own words:

When the civil war started, the Sierra Leonean Army thought that people who spoke Liberian English were ‘rebels’ [i.e. RUF combatants]. There was even a chance I might be killed. My father was living in Liberia, and I spoke Liberian English. When I was attending university in Bo, I decided to join the LUDF. The LUDF also had a lot of Sierra Leoneans in it. I think there were several hundred of them. I underwent military training for a few months. As I wanted to return to Monrovia, I didn’t intend to stay in Sierra Leone; my plan was to go to Liberia as a member of the ULIMO. But before that, I went to say goodbye to my mother who was living in Bo. When I got there, she was harshly against my plan. So I decided not to go.

Sparrow’s explanation shows that he had two reasons for joining the LUDF; one being oppression by the SLA and the other being a wish to return home. His younger brother was also involved with the ULIMO. Unlike Sparrow, he was raised in Sierra Leone instead of Liberia and was living with his maternal grandparents in a village on the outskirts of Bo. Before Liberia was embroiled in the civil war, he frequently went to visit his father and elder brother (Sparrow) in Monrovia. The younger brother narrated the following story.

When the civil war started, the villagers began to suspect that I had some sort of relationship with the rebels, so I left the village and went to Kenema. I met up with Sparrow in Kenema and we decided to join the ULIMO together [...] I received some military training for about two months. They had to deploy people quickly due to the war situation, so the time spent doing training with ULIMO varied depending on when people joined up. After getting my training, I invaded Liberia with ULIMO, but we were driven back to the border by the NPFL. That’s when I left ULIMO. I wasn’t getting paid anything while I was with them, and I had a girlfriend in Sierra Leone, so I went back to Bo. My girlfriend was running a small business there and she supported me through that.⁵³

The narrative tells that suspicion was also cast on Sparrow's brother that he might be a rebel because he had family living in Liberia.

As both these narratives show, Sierra Leoneans often use the word 'rebels' when referring to the RUF. From this point onwards, it would be best to take the term 'rebel' to mean 'RUF'.

Unlike Sparrow and his brother, there were some Sierra Leonean elements who did go into Liberia as combatants and stayed in Liberia as a part of the ULIMO. One such man was Ibrahim Jalloh, a Sierra Leonean who gave the following account of his time in the ULIMO.

The Sierra Leone Army organised the Liberian refugees in order to deal with the rebels. These Liberian refugees didn't know anything about Sierra Leone. Sierra Leonean guides were required in order for them to be able to advance. I was one of those guides. I was then told by [a commander of] the ULIMO, 'You're brave; why don't you become a fighter?' and so I became an ULIMO combatant. We pushed the rebels back [to the Liberian border]. Then we carried on and invaded Liberia. I became a combatant in the Liberian side.⁵⁴

In this narrative, Jalloh said that he became a combatant because he was brave. However, his friend told me that actually he had no choice but to remain with the ULIMO. He was from Potoru in Pujehun District, near the Liberian border. At the time, Potoru was under the control of the rebel. Therefore, even though he himself was in a region controlled by the Sierra Leonean government, he was still suspected of being a rebel collaborator. He had no other choice but to stay with the ULIMO.

The narratives described here show that many Sierra Leoneans joined the ULIMO (or the LUDF) and they included people who had gone into Liberia as combatants and others who remained behind in Sierra Leone. Among the latter, there were some who later ended up joining the Kamajors and, through their contacts, the Liberian combatants came to be drawn into the Kamajors. Their story is told in Chapter 8.

3. The Mobilisation of Local Residents by the Sierra Leonean Army

During the initial stage of the civil war, the SLA mobilised local residents in a number of different ways, which are described below.

Mobilisation of Irregular Troops as Personal Clients of Commanders

Right after the outbreak of the civil war, the fighting was centred along the main roads. The front line was straightforward in appearance, with the government forces and rebels simply facing off against each other. However, within the space of a few months, the fighting became more refined and both sides began to outflank each other using the bush paths. This development brought about a need for people who knew the local terrain. The SLA mobilised locals who were familiar with these paths through the bush and made them guides (TRC 3A 2004: 134).

SLA units that were sent to the front lines were not necessarily fully controlled and coordinated by the overall commanders. Rather, respective unit each carried out their operations autonomously. There were even some units on the front line that used local residents as combatants (Hoffman 2011a: 33). The Sierra Leonean scholars Abdullah and Muana made the following observation about local people who were pressed into service by the SLA:

The Sierra Leone army [...] began recruitment of irregular forces from border-zone youth [...] Some recruited youths had lost parents or guardians in the first wave of RUF attacks and were keen for revenge. Others were seeking, in military training, a substitute for educational opportunities disrupted by the conflict. Older recruits were inducted into the army. Very young irregulars were taken on as ‘apprentices’, personally loyal to their recruiting officer, without army identification. A combatant refers to this officer as his or her *bra* (big brother). (Abdullah and Muana 1998: 180)

Local youths living near the front line, including children, were mobilised by the SLA in such a way. It would be wrong to simply regard this as a forced conscription of children. As stated earlier, Sierra Leone has a custom of apprenticeships, in which those who

are economically comfortable get certain children to do various chores for them and, in return, they take care of them. The mobilisation of children at the front line perhaps needs to be understood as a sort of extension of that. It may be said that the SLA commanders were fulfilling the role of a sort of temporary patron. Even during my interviews, I encountered someone who was carrying out odd jobs such as cleaning, cooking and doing laundry for SLA soldiers who were stationed nearby. He received meals in exchange for his work and later went on to serve in Sierra Leone's military. The SLA thus mobilised local youths (and children) as clients and made them take part in the fighting or perform various chores.

Captain Prince Ben-Hirsh's 'Airborne Division'

Captain Prince Ben-Hirsh's mobilisation of local youths is famous as an initial attempt at their successful deployment. In 1991, Captain Ben-Hirsh mobilised some unemployed young people and diamond miners to form what he called the 'Airborne Division' in his hometown of Segbwema in the Kailahun District (the name 'Airborne Division' was no more than a name for the unit and it did not denote its capabilities). Making use of lateral connections with the Poro Society, he gathered young people together from the surrounding villages to form this unit (Fithen and Richards 2005: 128). Relying on their knowledge of the local terrain, he then carried out a sweep-up operation against the rebels and achieved a certain degree of success (Gberie 2005: 76; Keen 2005: 91; Muana 1997; Richards 1996: 9).

However, in February 1992 Captain Ben-Hirsh died in a surprise attack on Daru, where the SLA was stationed. As the Airborne Division was made up of people who were personally loyal to him, it disbanded after his death. There was a rumour that the raid in which he died was carried out by elements in the SLA who disapproved of Ben-Hirsh (Richards 1996: 6; Gberie 2005: 76–77). One Sierra Leonean newspaper wrote that before his death Captain Ben-Hirsh repeatedly said, 'If I am to die, it will not be in the hand of the rebels but in the hands of fellow soldiers'.⁵⁵

The Tamaboro: the First Ethnic-based Vigilante Group

Early mobilisations of civilians like that of Captain Ben-Hirsh's Airborne Division were carried out by individual commanders. As a result, the members would soon disband once the commander was no longer present. Later, though, mobilisations by the SLA began to be more organised. In 1992, the first ethnicity-based vigilante group, the Tamaboro, was formed. The SLA formed the Tamaboro in a planned and organised manner.

The Tamaboro was a paramilitary group inspired by the traditional hunters, just like the Kamajors. 'Tamaboro' is a word of the Kuranko people meaning 'hunter'. Originally, Tamaboro was a hunter who caught monkeys and chimpanzees and exported them as meat to Liberian markets in order to earn money (Fithen 1999: 206).⁵⁶ Unlike the Kamajors (hunter Kamajors), people had to undergo an initiation ceremony in order to become a Tamaboro. A candidate is initiated at puberty and then during their apprenticeships, they gained the required knowledge of bush paths and hunting. Tamaboro were extremely knowledgeable about the geography and terrain of a broad swathe of land and it is said that they were familiar with a much larger area of land than the hunters of other ethnic groups (Fithen 1999: 206–207).

The NPRC regime, which came to power after a coup in April 1992, carried out a strategic mobilisation of hunter Tamaboro in Koinadugu District in Sierra Leone's northern province. Between July and October 1992, the members of the SLA's senior staff visited each chiefdom. There are 11 chiefdoms in the Koinadugu District, and the senior staff negotiated with the traditional authorities in each chiefdom to get them to gather their local hunters and form units (Smith et al. 2004: 164). Lieutenant Samuel Komba Kambo, who was the Minister of Defence, took the leading role in organising the Tamaboro. Lieutenant Kambo was one of the young low-ranking officers from Koinadugu District who joined the NPRC's coup d'état. After a request from the NPRC, the hunters and other young people were assembled in each chiefdom. The order summoning the young people to gather was passed from the paramount chief down to the town chiefs and section chiefs. In *Conflict Mapping*, the following example from Neini Chiefdom is revealed:

At about the same time civilian militia started to be formed in various chiefdoms and were gathered to be trained by the SLA in the tactics of guerrilla warfare and ambushes in the headquarter town of Kabala, Wara Wara Yagala Chiefdom [in Koinadugu District]. They were named the Tamaboros. [...] Recruitment to the Tamaboros continued through November and December 1992. In late November 1992, a member of the Sierra Leone Police entered the town of Alikalia (Neini Chiefdom) with a message for the section chief from the Neini paramount chief ordering him to gather all hunters in the section and send them to Yiffin town within 7 days. Later, on 23 December 1992, 43 hunters left the town of Firiwa (Neini Chiefdom) for the town of Yiffin, further south in the Neini Chiefdom. [...] a different section [within the chiefdom] sent 43 hunters on December 23rd. (Smith et al. 2004: 164)

This demonstrates how the order to mobilise was passed down from a paramount chief to lower ranking chiefs. In August 1992, 450 people were mustered and sent to Kono and Kailahun Districts, which were on the front line (Fithen 1999: 207). Many women were also mobilised.

It is thought that of the young people who were drafted as Tamaboro, only a handful were actually traditional Tamaboro hunters; this is because it is unlikely that there were many such hunters who were familiar with such a wide area of terrain. Nevertheless, the youths who were deployed from Koinadugu District went by the name 'Tamaboro'.

Around 1993, the Tamaboro started to be featured a lot in the media for their military successes. The newspapers reported that the group of Tamaboro had the power to repel bullets (Fithen 1999: 207). The fact that there were also many female combatants in the unit also grabbed the attention of the Press (Gberie 2005: 82). Accompanying many of the articles about the Tamaboro in newspapers published in Freetown were photographs of female combatants practising magic or patrolling with weapons (Fithen 1999: 207). The role of leader in the Tamaboro was taken by a witchdoctor called Daembaso Samura. Before any fighting, he would perform a preparation ritual for the Tamaboro combatants (Gberie 2005: 82). In order to persuade the

traditional authorities, Lieutenant Kambo of the NPRC promised that he would use a powerful witchdoctor, and it is thought that this is why a witchdoctor ended up in a leadership role.

Tamaboro is the term for the traditional hunters of the Kuranko people, but people from other ethnic groups besides the Kuranko were also part of the Tamaboro military organisation, as other groups that were also from the northern part of the country joined. The field commander of the Tamaboro was a woman called Marie Keita and the commanders under her were chosen from the five different ethnic groups that lived in Koinadugu District: Yalunka, Kuranko, Limba, Fullah and Mandingo (Smith et al. 2004: 164). Furthermore, the lower ranks of the organisation were divided up according to the geographical divisions of chiefdom, section and village. The commanders at each level were appointed based on their social position within each chiefdom (Fithen 1999: 208).

The Tamaboro achieved a certain amount of success in their fight against the RUF. Nevertheless, the organisation ended up being dissolved; as certain elements in the SLA took advantage of the civil war for their own nefarious purposes, the activities of the Tamaboro became a hindrance. For example, in June 1993, the Tamaboro detained 30 soldiers from the SLA at Masingbi in Tonkolili District on the suspicion that they had disguised themselves as rebels to carry out acts of banditry. The detention of the troops caused deterioration in relations between the Tamaboro and the SLA. In October 1993, the RUF attacked Kabala in Koinadugu District, which was the base of the Tamaboro, and the witchdoctor Samura and field commander Marie Keita were brutally murdered. The Tamaboro never recovered from this and faded out of existence (Gberie 2005: 83; Hoffman 2011a: 38; Jackson 2004: 144). The town of Kabala where the Tamaboro were attacked was some distance from the districts of Kono and Kailahun where the RUF were active, so the area should have been safe and secure under the SLA. This sparked rumours after the killings that someone in the SLA had deliberately been pulling strings behind the scenes when the attacks took place.

The Eastern Region Defence Committee: the First Vigilante Group in the Mende Land

A similar project to the Tamaboro was also tried out in the Mende land. In December 1992, the Eastern Region Defence Committee (EREDCOM) was established in Kenema (the 'Eastern Region' meant the districts of Kenema, Kailahun and Kono) through a mobilisation by the SLA. Tom Nyuma, who was the Secretary of State for the Eastern Province, initially led the drive behind the organisation of this group. Like Lieutenant Komba Kambo, Nyuma was one of the young officers who had led the NPRC coup d'état. He was a Kissi from Kailahun District.

The person who was appointed by the chairman of EREDCOM was Alpha Lavalie. He had received a Ph.D. from the Centre of African Studies at SOAS, which is part of the University of London, then taught history at the University of Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College. He had also served as the Deputy Secretary General of the SLPP, which was reformed in the process of democratisation of Sierra Leone in the early 1990s (Alie 2005). As stated earlier, there were strong links between the SLPP and Mende people's traditional authorities. Through Lavalie, the NPRC worked to persuade the traditional authorities in each chiefdom. Responding to Alpha Lavalie's appeal, these traditional authorities called on their young people, especially the hunter Kamajors, and the EREDCOM was formed (Muana 1997).

During the course of my fieldwork, I met an elderly man who had joined EREDCOM and went to become a war Kamajor afterwards. He told me about the EREDCOM as follows:

In 1992, Alpha Lavalie made an appeal to the government and international community, as well as to religious leaders and the paramount chiefs. 'We want to join the battle against RUF'. The NPRC accepted the offer. The paramount chief of the Nongowa Chiefdom [in Kenema District] agreed to set up a headquarters [The capital of Nongowa Chiefdom is Kenema]. This is how the EREDCOM headquarters was established in Kenema. At the time, the rebels were operating in Kailahun District. Kenema became a base from which they could send combatants to the front line. The paramount chiefs in

Kenema District sent hot-blooded men to Lavalie to make them learn how to use weapons. [After their training] they were handed over to Colonel Kanu of the Sierra Leonean Army. The colonel was also the leader of a brigade called the Kenema Brigade. Of the young men sent, 139 were posted to Daru. There wasn't an initiation ceremony at that time. They didn't call themselves 'Kamajors', either. They called themselves 'vigilantes'. The Kamajors [hunter Kamajors] were called up because they could use single-barrel guns. Alpha [Lavalie] was someone with a strong patriotic spirit. He called on the [hunter] Kamajors in order to protect Sierra Leone.⁵⁷

Although this account tends towards excessive idealisation of the work of Lavalie and the traditional authorities, it does conform to the written resources in two points. First, the hunter Kamajors formed the core of fighters mobilised by the EREDCOM, while regular young people were also enrolled. The narrator of this account himself was not a hunter Kamajor. Second, Lavalie and others acted as intermediaries for the SLA and gathered together young people from the chiefdoms for the army.

The EREDCOM was no exception to the rule as it also disbanded after the death of its chairman. On 8 February 1994, Lavalie was in his car at Mano Junction (a town 21 km from Kenema) when he drove over a mine and was killed in the explosion.⁵⁸ There was something odd about this incident and it is rumoured that the SLA had something to do with it (Hoffman 2011a: 38).

The Kamajors (war Kamajors) themselves often mention EREDCOM when they talk about their origins. The Kamajor who gave the account above was no exception. There are many examples in academic studies in which EREDCOM is shown as the beginning of the war Kamajors (Alie 2005; Hoffman 2011a; Keen 2005). However, doubts remain about the continuity between EREDCOM and the Kamajors. The former may be said to be the first example of hunter Kamajors being mobilised for the civil war. Nevertheless, the EREDCOM was set up under the leadership of the SLA, and so it was different from the hunter militias which were established to protect each chiefdom and were led by the traditional authorities. In fact, many of the 'vigilantes' of the EREDCOM went back to their

respective chiefdoms after it disbanded. Thus, even though there are people within the Kamajors who say that EREDCOM was the origin of the Kamajors, such statements should be taken with some reservation.

* * *

This chapter has looked at the mobilisation of local people by the SLA. Although initially carried out on a fairly ad hoc basis, it became more organised as the civil war turned into a protracted struggle. With the pressing need to deal with the RUF, the Sierra Leone government bolstered its military might through a number of measures. Of those, this chapter has examined in detail the mobilisation of both Liberian refugees and local residents.

Liberian refugees mobilised by the Sierra Leonean government in order to engage in counter-insurgency operations against the RUF formed the armed group the ULIMO in the First Liberian Civil War. While they fought against the RUF in Sierra Leone, they emerged as an armed force in Liberia. There were also some Sierra Leoneans who joined the ULIMO, which led to the creation of a human network of both Liberians and Sierra Leoneans.

Local residents were also mobilised by the SLA, and examples of this include the Tamaboro in the north and EREDCOM in the Mende land. Their operations were only carried out under the control of the military and they did not operate independently.

The mobilisation of local people described in this chapter was led by the SLA, and the local people themselves did not act independently for themselves. Although there were some successful deployments, in many cases these civilian units were disbanded upon the death of their leader. It is thought that the reason for this is that the SLA was afraid that these mobilised units would become too powerful. If they trained up a suitable individual and concentrated authority with him, all they had to do if he was no longer convenient to them was kill him and the problem would be solved. The SLA thus mobilised local civilians while taking great care that no other military force would emerge on the scene.

The Emergence of Small Networks: The Middle of the NPRC Administration (1994–1995)

Between 1994 and 1995, inhabitants in chiefdoms around the country were being organised into hunter-militias by the traditional authorities. In other words, small PC networks that had their foundation in each chiefdom manifested themselves all over the country. This chapter looks at the process through which this came about.

The first section describes the context in which the hunter-militias were formed. It shows that the RUF's shift to guerrilla tactics, which included their attacks on villages, was one of the reasons behind the formation of the hunter-militias. Another reason is that there were elements of the Sierra Leone Army stealing from local villagers, and the people were looking for a means to protect themselves from the SLA as well. The second section confirms that the Bo and Kenema regions were at the heart of the process through which the hunter-militia was formed. The third section then identifies the process of establishing the Kamajor Society in the Bonthe area.

1. The Background to the Formation of the Hunter-Militias: The RUF's Guerrilla Strategy and 'Sobel'

There were primarily two reasons why local residents began to form hunter-militias to protect themselves. First was the fact that the RUF had switched to guerrilla warfare and was now launching raids on villages and towns. Second, the SLA, which was supposed to put down the insurrection, was taking advantage of the confusion to plunder and loot from the locals. It was these factors that created the need for local residents to defend themselves.

The RUF's Guerrilla Strategy: Making Use of Geographical Features

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the SLA adopted a variety of measures in order to tackle the rebellion and they resulted

in the temporary defeat of the RUF. By the end of 1993, the RUF had been pushed back to the Liberian border and no activity by them was seen after that. Captain Strasser, the head of the NPRC, unilaterally declared a one-month ceasefire and announced that amnesty would be given during that period to any RUF combatants who surrendered (Amnesty International 1995). The civil war appeared to be over; however, in 1994, the RUF changed their tactics and recommenced their operations.

Until being driven back by the SLA, the RUF had fought to expand the area under its control. The areas controlled by the RUF and the government were clearly demarcated, but after the RUF restarted its activities, the RUF forces began to covertly use bush paths to penetrate deep into government-held territory. It set up camps well away from human habitation and, using them as bases, traversed the bush paths to launch surprise attacks on towns and villages (Richards 2003: 15; TRC 3A 2004: 182–196). Below is an account by the journalist Jin'ichi Matsumoto of an attack by the RUF.

Continuing to move over the wild terrain, the squad of guerrillas walks without anything bulky or heavy like food supplies. If they get hungry, they will attack a nearby village. From the windward, a dozen or more soldiers hide in the bush while stealthily drawing closer to the village. When they get to within about 10 metres, they all rise up shouting, and charge into the village while wildly firing their AK47s. The inhabitants flee in surprise. Then, the guerrillas enter the settlement and steal all the cooked food. The squad will live for two or three days in the houses vacated by the inhabitants when they fled, then move on after they have eaten all the village's food. (Matsumoto 2004: 17–18)

The RUF organised its fighters into platoons of 30 or so strong. With numbers like this, it was impossible to maintain a fixed area of control, so they usually withdrew quickly after a raid. When they attacked towns, they would plunder as much as they could carry and also kidnap the inhabitants to use them as either porters or to turn them into fighters.

Perhaps to create further the confusion, the RUF would also disguise themselves as SLA troops, putting on the SLA's official uniforms and boots before launching a raid. It is also said that the reason for the deception was to make the SLA lose credibility by making the locals think that it was carrying out the attacks. The remarks below are taken from a report by Amnesty International.

On 26 December 1994, a group of about 40 men, armed and dressed in military uniforms, entered Mattru [in Bonthe District] and said they were government soldiers who had come to protect Mattru following a rebel attack the day before on the nearby town of Tikonko [...] Later that day, many more men, apparently soldiers since they were dressed in full army uniforms and well-armed, arrived in Mattru. Villagers took shelter in their homes when they heard shooting. They were later forced to come out by men in army uniforms but who identified themselves as RUF rebels and who interrogated them about the presence of soldiers in the village. The soldiers who had earlier come to Mattru claiming to protect the village appeared to have abandoned it completely. Several young men were killed by rebels in Mattru, houses were destroyed and property looted. (Amnesty International 1995)

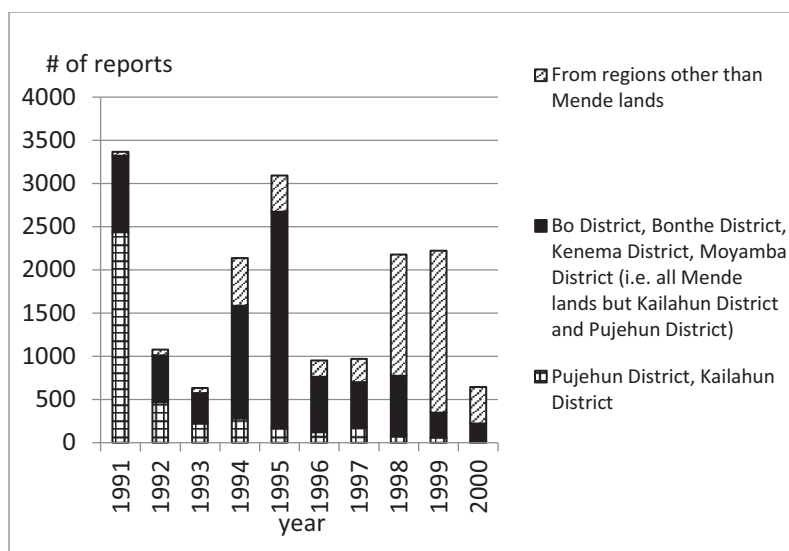
This shows how the RUF were carrying out attacks while wearing the uniform of the SLA, and it is not hard to imagine how this would have stirred up a sense of confusion among the people.

Units in the RUF had to be able to tell if another unit it encountered was friend or foe. This was true not only for these camouflaged units, as there were many combatants who just wore their normal, everyday clothes. The way they used to distinguish themselves from enemy units was to speak in tongues. For example, one RUF unit might greet another by calling out the word, 'Tango!' and if the other unit were also in the RUF, its members would know the word or phrase to reply to that. If the other unit did not know the correct reply, it would mean they are not on the same side.⁵⁹

The Mende land became the focal point of the RUF's guerrilla war and, as a result, it saw many violations of human rights. Figure 6.1 shows the number of violations committed by the RUF that were

reported to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In 1991, when the civil war broke out, the places where the most abuses of human rights were reported were Pujehun and Kailahun Districts, which both lie on the country's border. The reason why they saw most such incidents is that the RUF, which entered Sierra Leone from Liberia, invaded these border districts first. The number of reported human rights violations decreased in 1992 and 1993, which most likely reflects the decline in the RUF's power. In contrast, however, in the years following 1994, when the RUF switched to guerrilla tactics, many violations were reported in the districts of Bo, Bonthe, Kenema and Moyamba. In addition to these districts, the Mende land also covers Pujehun and Kailahun. As can be seen from Figure 6-1, up to and including much of 1995, most of the civil war took place in the Mende land.

Figure 6-1: Number of incidents of human rights violation abuses by the RUF



(Source: Created by author based on TRC 3A 2004)

Looting by SLA Soldiers

The inhabitants of the Mende land were not only afflicted by attacks from the RUF; they also suffered from looting by the soldiers of the SLA. In order to tackle the threat of the RUF, the Sierra Leonean government rapidly increased its military's troop strength, with the result that young men were sent to the front lines without receiving sufficient training. Some took advantage of the confusion of the civil war to line their own pockets. Among the units that were operating autonomously in the battle zone were some that looted and plundered remote villages while they were away from the eyes of the SLA's commanders. The following is taken from a report by Amnesty International.

When Njala Town (in the Komboya Chiefdom, Bo District) was attacked by the RUF, one of the commanders [of the Sierra Leone Army] was killed in the confusion. He was a soldier who faithfully carried out orders from the army. After he was killed, his troops spent all their time looting. They would ride on trucks into villages while wildly firing off their guns, load all the food and valuables onto their trucks, then drive off. (Amnesty International 1995)

The villagers would flee when they heard the sound of gunfire. After the troops fired off shots randomly and entered the village, they would steal food and possessions and other things, including the corrugated zinc rooves from houses. The looted items would be carried to cities such as Kenema, Makeni, Bo and Freetown and sold there (Keen 2005: 119). SLA troops who took part in this looting were ridiculed as being 'sobels', a portmanteau word meaning that they were both soldiers and rebels.

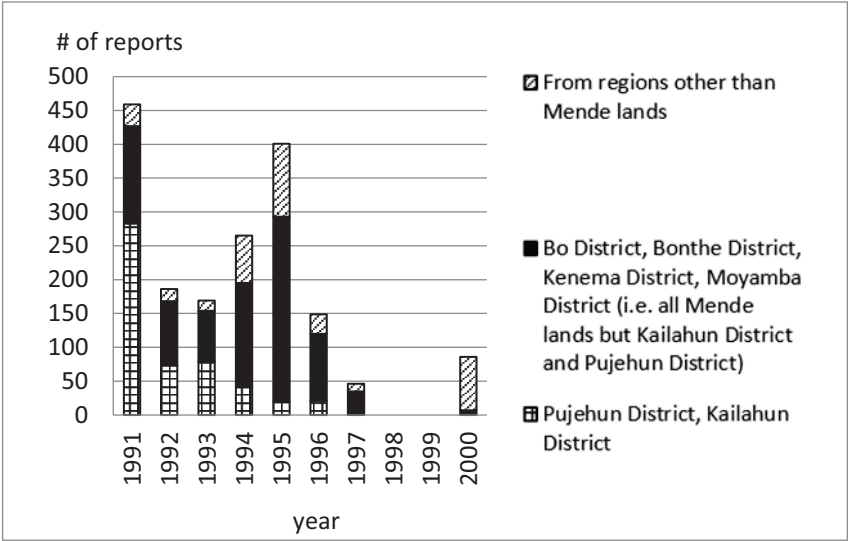
Even though these actions can be described as looting by the army, it was not actually systematically carried out by the SLA, but rather it was done by only some soldiers who were out of control. Military command was in fact at a loss as to how to deal with them. For example, there was a report in a newspaper on 24 May 1993 with the headline 'Four Soldiers Arrested with Looted Property'.

The Secretary of State, North, Major Fallah Sewah [...] ordered soldiers of the NPRC task force of Makani to arrest all persons found in possession of looted property, irrespective of any affiliation. The clampdown on this despicable and unpatriotic activities came as no surprise as the Secretary of State had openly warned all members of the armed forces against harassing peaceful citizens and looting property from the war zone [Author's note: this order was given out because on 18 May several soldiers in the SLA had been arrested for looting]. [...] Before sunset on Tuesday, May 18, various articles including deep freezers, Lister generator, various building materials, electrical appliances and other articles [...] were discovered and brought to the NPRC secretariat. Four soldiers [...] were also arrested with looted property from the war front.⁶⁰

This article thus demonstrates that some members of the SLA did take part in the looting, and that the military command struggled to control it.

The number of reported abuses of human rights by the SLA also increased in the Mende land from 1994, when the RUF began to adopt guerrilla tactics. Figure 6-2 shows the number of reported human rights violations by the Sierra Leone army. In the period from 1994 to 1995, the increase in such incidents mirrored those inflicted by the RUF.

Figure 6-2: Number of incidents of human rights violation abuses by the SLA



(Source: Created by author based on TRC 3A 2004)

2. The Formation of Hunter Militias

In order to protect themselves from the RUF and looting by the SLA, local inhabitants organised themselves into vigilante groups. The traditional authorities, particularly the paramount chiefs, led the way in the formation of these organisations.⁶¹ Under their leadership, the young people were gathered together in each chiefdom and armed with whatever weapons were available, such as machetes (cutlasses⁶²), knives and single-barrel guns. It was the traditional hunters who played a key role in this. Over time, these vigilante organisations came to be called ‘hunter militias’ (Smith et al. 2004: 382).

Hunter Militias in the Early Days of the War

Many hunter militias were formed in the Bo-Kenema area, which suffered a particularly large number of attacks. These hunter militias were organised throughout the region to protect the chiefdom from attacks by the RUF, and they operated independently in each chiefdom. In places where the local inhabitants did not trust the

government forces, the SLA was viewed with great distrust. On the other hand, however, there were hunter militias that worked to defend the areas by cooperating with the SLA. In the case of the latter, they reported sightings of rebels to the SLA and handed over captured combatants to them. Additionally, some hunter-militias were also provided with arms by the SLA.

Although the hunter militias were organised separately in their respective chiefdoms, in many cases they also maintained cooperative relations with neighbouring chiefdoms. An example of this is the Krim Civil Defence Unit; it was created through collaboration between several chiefdoms in the border area between the Bonthe and Pujehun Districts.⁶³ Furthermore, the chiefs and leading figures in the town of Bo joined together to form the 'Civil Defence Committee in Bo'. This body called on young people to carry out night patrols and set up checkpoints.⁶⁴ Moreover, a large scale mobilisation was implemented in Kailahun under the banner of the 'Kailahun District War Effort' (Hoffman 2011a: 73).

At this point in the civil war, the leadership of the hunter-militias was in the hands of the traditional authorities, led by the paramount chiefs. It was they who decide whether or not to develop cooperative relationships with the SLA.

The Rise of Samuel Hinga Norman

One example of a traditional authority was Samuel Hinga Norman, who was later put on trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. To begin with, he led a hunter militia as a regent chief within the Jiamia Bongor Chiefdom. A regent chief is a post held when there is no paramount chief; e.g. when a paramount chief dies and there is no suitable successor, a regent chief is appointed as a temporary replacement. In order to become a regent chief, there is no particular requirement to come from a traditional ruling lineage.

Hinga Norman was born in Mongeri in the Valunia Chiefdom⁶⁵ of Bo District in 1940, and his parents were part of the chiefdom's ruling family. He joined the colonial army (the Sierra Leone Battalion, Royal West African Frontier Force) in 1954 (which later became the Sierra Leone Army when the country gained independence). In other words, he had military experience dating back to his younger days.

He was also well known as being sympathetic to the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). In 1967, when the SLPP lost to the APC in the elections that year, Norman, who was by then serving in the army, took part in a coup against the government. The aim of this coup was to prevent the APC leader, Siaka Stevens, from taking up the position of prime minister, and it is thought that the SLPP were controlling the plotters from behind the scenes. The coup succeeded in preventing Stevens's immediate appointment as Prime Minister, but after the ensuing political turmoil, he was able to assume the post the following year. That same year, 1968, Norman was also arrested and jailed for his part in the coup. Even after he was freed in 1972, he was still persecuted at the hands of the APC. Sensing that he was in danger, he fled to neighbouring Liberia in 1978, where he began to run a poultry farm that was successful enough for him to employ several young farmhands (SCSL 24 January 2006: 53). He returned to Sierra Leone in 1989, going back to his birthplace of Valunia Chiefdom and becoming Speaker (an administrative position in the traditional authority). In October 1993, approximately two years after the outbreak of the civil war, Norman was asked to become the regent chief of the Jaima Bongor Chiefdom. He accepted the request and moved his residence to Telu, the centre of Jaima Bongor Chiefdom (SCSL 24 January, 2006: 49–54).⁶⁶

Norman began to organise the hunter-militia soon after taking up his new post. In *Conflict Mapping*, the following account of the hunter-militia in the Jaima Bongo Chiefdom is given:

Most likely in early in 1994, upon receiving news that the war was approaching his chiefdom, the regent chief of Jaima Bongor Chiefdom decided that all the towns and villages of his chiefdom should mobilise their youths to guard their villages against the assailants. The old hunters were asked to give their guns to the youths and the youths and local hunters were trained, after permission was granted from the resident minister of Bo. Youths and local hunters from Boama and Bagbe Chiefdoms also organized themselves in a similar fashion. By June 1994, the training was complete and 2,800 men composed of youths and local hunters were issued with arms and ammunition. (Smith et al. 2004: 388)

After he had organised the hunter-militia in this way, Norman succeeded in repelling the RUF. The key to his success was the fact that he split the militia up into small units like the RUF (Smith et al. 2004: 388).

When testifying in the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Norman himself said that when he became the regent chief, displaced people seeking refuge from within Sierra Leone were already pouring into Jaima Bongor and surrounding chiefdoms. In order to prepare for the rebel attacks, he consulted with five other nearby chiefdoms,⁶⁷ which led to each chiefdom choosing 75 young men. The selection was left to the individual chiefdoms, and in the case of Jaima Bongor, the young men were chosen after discussions with the section chiefs. The young men who were thus called up from the six chiefdoms were then given military training, and with his army background, Norman also took part in this as an instructor. Upon the completion of their training, the men returned to their respective chiefdoms to take up their vigilante duties (SCSL 24 January 2006: 59).

During this time, the activities of the hunter militias were limited to the areas within their respective chiefdoms. When the neighbouring chiefdom of Wunde was attacked, Jaima Bongor Chiefdom and its hunter militia only went as far as deploying along the border. Also, the Territorial Defence Force of Boama was only deployed to two towns which were located in strategic positions in the chiefdom (Smith et al. 2004: 389). In the early days of the hunter militias, they operated under the control of the paramount chiefs, and their activities were limited to the areas within the chiefdom they served. Furthermore, although Norman was eventually to become leader of the pro-government CDF, at this point in the conflict he was no more than a traditional authority leading a hunter militia in a single chiefdom.

Many other hunter militias were formed at the same time as the ones around Norman's chiefdom. The Simbaru Chiefdom in Kenema District is a good example of this. People in the chiefdom began attempting to defend themselves after the chiefdom was attacked by the RUF. In March 1994, the town of Boajibu, which was the headquarters of the chiefdom, fell into the hands of the RUF, although the rebels were driven out by the SLA after 17 days (Smith

et al. 2004: 308). This incident led to the formation of a hunter militia in the chiefdom. *Conflict Mapping* gives the following account of the course of events in Simbaru Chiefdom:

Local hunters in Simbaru Chiefdom decided to organise themselves and provide assistance to SLA forces, mainly by showing them routes within the chiefdom. At this time, proper initiation was not taking place; rather it was an informal gathering of men above 20 years who then presented themselves to the SLA. This movement also took place in Wandor Chiefdom, where a meeting with local hunters from neighbouring chiefdoms was organised.⁶⁸ (Smith et al. 2004: 311)

This description can also be verified from oral accounts obtained during my field research. I met an individual who said he had provided military training to the hunter militia in Simbaru Chiefdom. His name was Mohammed Duai, and he left the army in 1994. The following is his description of how he ended up as a military instructor in Simbaru Chiefdom after leaving the army.

I used to be in the SLA. I was sent to the front lines, but my commanding officer was collaborating with the RUF behind the scenes. He was diverting SLA supplies to the RUF. I thought this war was stupid, so I quit the army. I spent two or three months in Freetown doing nothing much, then Madam Gamanga, the paramount chief of Simbaru Chiefdom, came to visit me. She said that she wanted me to give the hunters some military training. I said 'OK', and started giving training in Boajibu. There were two other instructors besides me in Boajibu. One was a former SLA soldier like me and the other was a guy who used to serve in the Liberian army. It wasn't just hunters from Simbaru Chiefdom who were getting instruction, as there were people who had come from all over Kenema District.⁶⁹

This narrative clearly demonstrates that chiefdoms across the country were forming hunter militias in the face of the threat posed by the RUF.

The Massacre of Telu

The Jaima Bongor Chiefdom's hunter militia led by Samuel Hinga Norman repelled numerous attacks by the rebels. However, the RUF then embarked on a large-scale offensive targeting the chiefdom, and it was this offensive that led to the Telu Massacre of June 30, 1994. In the course of this massacre, the vast majority of the hunter militia were slaughtered and Norman had to flee from the chiefdom. Newspapers at the time featured the testimony of one of the survivors

The time may have been about 6 a.m. This town of several hundreds was just waking up. I started hearing gunshots from all around the place. For a while, I thought it was the Kamajors who were practising, but then the shots were louder and more intense. The situation caused a whole lot of confusion. Pandemonium is the right word. People started running here and there with absolutely no sense of direction. Then the shooting gang appeared. I heaved a sigh of relief at first when I saw them in military uniform. 'These are our soldiers', I gloated quietly to myself. But that happiness evaporated when not very far from where I was standing I saw a 'soldier' shoot a woman down at close range. I saw another person fall not far from me and yet another!

I could hear cries and screams all over the place. At that point, I rushed into the mosque to hide, hoping that even these murderous people would respect the house of God and not enter it to kill. They did not enter. I don't know, however, whether it was because they had God in their hearts or by sheer omission.

By about midday, the firing stopped. It was about at this time that our luck, three of us, seemed to have run out. Three rebels entered the mosque and discovered us. You can imagine how I felt. 'Goodbye to the world', I said in my heart.

But this was not to be.

God was still with us. One of them wanted us shot. Another said: 'We have killed enough for today. There is no point wasting ammunition. It could be put to better use'.

They paused, looked at us whimsically and left. It was also about this time the real soldiers may have arrived. I peeped out to see if they

Photograph 6-1: Contemporary newspaper article reporting the Massacre at Telu

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MOHAMED WANZA MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

THESE STATEMENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

"The NPIC notes the report by the Commission of the SLPMB's individuals in the sum L42,644,431 (forty-two million, six hundred and forty-four thousand, four hundred and thirty-one) in respect of drugs supplied to its Dispensary and staff members between January, 1991, and March, 1992, by the Vaga Three Pharmacy unit - the proprietorship of a Mr. Mohamed Wanza.

"The NPIC also notes the report by the Commission that the SLPMB ordered out from Mr. Mohamed Wanza a consignment of 652 outer covers and 602 inner tubes for its fleet of Land Train Leyland vehicles which were being used to transport produce to Freetown at a total cost of US \$248,153.20 (two hundred and forty-nine thousand, one hundred and fifty-three dollars and twenty cents) and which were delivered by Mr. Wanza to the SLPMB in June, 1991, that despite of several promises by the Managing Director to effect settlement, nothing was done that after a series of complaints and protests, the supplier had to advance the consignment of items from the SLPMB in June 1992.

"The NPIC in this regard notes the Commission's recommendation that 'The supply of drugs by Mohamed Wanza to the tune of L42,644,431 seems to the Commission is just debt incurred by Marketing Board. Also the widening of the consignment of items ordered by the SLPMB, after twelve months seems to be unfair treatment. Such drugs and fees are recommended for payment. The supplier did attempt to convince the Commission that it is entitled to interest on these items-drugs and fees.'

The NPIC, directs that the Secretary of State for Trade, Industry and State Enterprises, who is presently supervising the Affairs of the now defunct SLPMB, to take appropriate action regarding the settlement of debt owed to Mr. Mohamed Wanza." (See Comments on Page 2)

TELU MASSACRE: A SURVIVOR TELLS HIS ORDEAL



screams all over the place. At that point, I rushed into the mosque to hide, hoping that even these murderous people would respect the house of God and not enter it to kill. They did not enter. I don't know, however, it was because they hidged in their hearts or by sheer omission. By about midday, the firing stopped. It was at about this time that our luck, three of us, seemed to have run out. Three rebels entered the mosque and discovered us. You can imagine how I felt. "Goodbye to the world", I said in my heart.

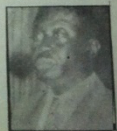
But this was not to be. see back page

BAR ASSOCIATION DISCUSSES JUSTICE AND THE REVOLUTION

BY LANS GBERE

Masasuqui was speaking at the Bar Association's 15th Annual Conference held at the Matta Conference Centre, Youyi Building. The session at which the president delivered his paper was chaired by Mr. I.B. Kargbo, Editor of the New citizen.

"It is the best way to lay a solid foundation see page 7



Franklin Kargbo

(From Vision, 14-21 July 1994)

were true soldiers. They were. I could identify someone among them that I knew. So we came out. That we saw was more gruesome than I had imagined: bodies of men. Women, (sic) little children, including babies. The place was like a mortuary.⁷⁰

Conflict Mapping also reports on the massacre at Telu, stating that after the attack the bodies of 70 of the hunter militia were discovered in front of the regent chief's house and the bodies of a further 20 civilians were also found (Smith et al. 2004: 390). At the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Norman testified that out of 75 members of the hunter militia, 50 were killed and he himself was captured by the rebels and was on the point of being killed, but at that moment the rebels heard gunfire and fled (SCSL 24 January 2006: 59–60).⁷¹

After the massacre at Telu, Norman went to live in the nearby town of Bo (SCSL 24 January 2006: 60). At the time, Bo was overflowing with internally displaced people who had fled there from all over Sierra Leone. After Norman moved to Bo, there was a move to organise the hunter militia there, which was spurred by support provided by the NPRC regime. The NPRC's Minister of Internal Affairs took the leading role and called for a conference to be held in Freetown with the chiefs from the chiefdoms. As a result of this meeting, the NPRC decided to provide the chiefs with shotguns (SCSL 25 January 2006). This was how the hunter militias came to be armed by the government, and how Norman gained more influence through his having overseen the process.

3. The Origin of Initiation Rites in the Bonthe Area

Hunter militias were formed all over the Mende land, and the Kamajor Society emerged during the course of their operations. This section verifies the process by which the Kamajor Society was created out of the activities of the hunter militia in the Bonthe area.

Hunter Militia in Bonthe District and Allieu Kondewa

Allieu Kondewa was one of the three people prosecuted at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and he was an initiator. There is a considerable amount of literature published indicating that it was he

who conceived the idea of having initiation ceremonies for the Kamajors (Muana 1997; TRC 3A 2004). There are also a number of oral accounts that say the ceremonies originated with him. However, some well-informed sources within the Kamajors say that this is not correct. According to one Kamajor, 'During the civil war, it was said with some credibility that Kondewa thought up the idea for initiation ceremonies, but that's not exactly true'. Kondewa did not propose the idea of these rites, but he was one of the initiators who started them. According to these former Kamajors, people only began to think he was the man who hit on the concept of having initiation rites after he became especially powerful.

Even though the idea was not his, there appears to be no doubt that at the time Kondewa was a herbalist of some renown in southern Sierra Leone. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, his reputation had spread throughout the south. He conducted rituals and used herbs to cure illnesses, and reportedly sometimes even carried out these rituals on himself (TRC 3A 2004: 215).

I will now give details of three oral accounts that say that Kondewa was the person behind the idea for the Kamajors' initiation ceremony. The first one was collected by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and states that the ceremonies began after three old women all saw the same dream. They lived in two different chiefdoms, Kwamebai Krim and Mano Sakrim. The testimony below was made before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by one Kamajor who spoke about these three individuals.

In the dream, [the three ladies] said that our ancestors have heard our cries and that they were willing to come to our rescue. According to them, we the men were instructed to gather at Kale village in the Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom and pour libation to our ancestors. They said our ancestors had signalled that upon doing that, a revelation would be made to one of the participants. We performed the ceremony [accordingly] and the revelation was given to Allieu Kondewa, who was then living in Kale, to be the initiator of the Kamajors. (TRC 3A 2004: 215)

The second oral account was collected by the Sierra Leonean anthropologist Patrick Muana.

Following an RUF attack on a village in the Jong Chiefdom [in Bonthe District], the rebels are reported to have massacred people in the village including a great Kamajoi (sic: Kamajor) and medicine man called Kposowai. His brother Kondorwai (sic: Kondewa) is said to have been captured by the rebels, forced to carry looted goods and tied with 'tabay' securely for the night while the rebels pitched camp.

As he drifted to sleep in spite of his pains, Kondewa is said to have had a vision of his brother who had been killed the day before. The ropes fell loose and the elder brother invested him with the authority to take to all able-bodied Mende men that the defence of their own lives, homes, wives and children was a sacred duty.

To assist them in that task, Kposowai is said to have shown Kondewa a secret concoction of herbs and instructed that a stringent initiation process should precede the 'washing' of the warriors in the herbs. This concoction would make them invincible in battle, impervious to bullets, and endow them with powers of clairvoyance if all taboos were kept. Kondewa is said to have slaughtered the RUF rebels, freed the other captives, and trekked several miles to a secret hiding place where he initiated the first set of men. (Muana 1997)

According to this tale, the site where Kondewa carried out the first initiation rite was the village of Kale. Since this account was cited by Patrick Muana in 1997 (Muana 1997), it has appeared in several publications (Alie 2005; Gberie 2005; TRC 3A 2004: 217; Włodarczyk 2009).

The third account was something I heard myself. Its narrator was Kamoh Mohammed Dr. Massallay, who served as an assistant to Kondewa during the initiations.

Kondewa met a woman in a dream. She said, 'Gather the medicine men together and protect the village. All the medicine men should come together and try out these magic herbs'. The woman showed Kondewa how to make the mix of magic herbs and how to test their efficacy. The way to test their effectiveness was done by setting two

poles upright, hanging up a white satin cloth between the poles and then firing a gun at it. The woman told Kondewa that if the cloth didn't let the bullet pass through it, then use that mix of herbs on the warriors. Kondewa began with the initiations based on this prophecy.⁷²

As these three accounts show, there are several different legends concerning the origins of the initiation rites. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, stories concerning the birth of the Kamajor Society had been told and then retold for several years, during which time they were changed and altered as they were influenced by Mende folk tales (TRC 3A 2004: 216–217).

As the first and second stories show, it appears certain that the origin of the Kamajor Society is in Kale Village. According to *Conflict Mapping*, resistance against the RUF by the inhabitants of Kale in the Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom of Bonthe District was the spur for the creation of the Kamajor Society. It states that when Kale was attacked by the RUF, three young men from the village killed two of the rebel combatants. When news of this reached the inhabitants of the neighbouring chiefdoms, they collaborated to form vigilante groups. They pooled their single-barrel guns, and jointly invested money to buy cartridges, and they also armed the fighters with knives, spears and cutlasses. The group introduced its own initiation ceremony, and *Conflict Mapping* states that it became the Kamajor Society (Smith et al. 2004: 431–432).

Saddam Sheriff and the Beginning of Initiation Rites in Kale Village

Guided by Sparrow, I went to Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom in order to gather some narratives about the birth of Kamajors. Someone familiar with events at the time stated that the originator of the initiation rites was a man called Kamoh Mwalim Saddam Sheriff (referred to as Saddam Sheriff from hereon), a Muslim intellectual who was killed during the civil war.⁷³ He lived in Gbandapi in the Panga Kabone Chiefdom of Pujehun District. When this area became embroiled in the civil war, he led some warriors on whom he had performed initiation rites of his own devising and drove away the rebels. It is said that the Kamajor societies started after Saddam Sheriff passed his knowledge of the initiations on to several other

herbalists and Islamic intellectuals. Kondewa also took part in this. One Kamajor gave the following information about the origins of the initiation rites.

In 1994, Saddam Sheriff summoned several young men in Gbandapi and performed an initiation ceremony into the Kamajors. After the ceremony, they were able to repel bullets, and drove the rebels out of Pujehun District. When the elders of Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom and Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom in the Bonthe District heard about this, they invited Saddam Sheriff to a meeting held in Kale Village. The reason why Kale Village was chosen was because the war had not reached there yet. The elders said to Saddam Sheriff, 'There are medicine men and Islamic intellectuals with us, too. Will you strengthen their powers?' Saddam Sheriff agreed to do this, and he passed his wisdom on to them. Among them were the medicine man Allieu Kondewa and the Islamic intellectual Kamoh Lahai Bangura. Saddam Sheriff passed on his knowledge and then he returned to Gbandapi. Later, Kondewa got permission from his chief to try out his powers. He was given three days to prepare a mix of magic herbs. A volunteer was sought to put his powers to the test. In front of a crowd, Kondewa made the volunteer wear a shirt that he had put a magic spell on, then the volunteer was shot with a gun. In the beginning, a man called Kota was shot and nothing happened. The people were delighted, and they began to dance on the spot. Next, the same experiment was tried on a volunteer called Musa. Nothing happened with him, either. The people of the chiefdom then decided to invite Saddam Sheriff so that he could conduct the initiation rites jointly with Kondewa. This is how Saddam Sherrif, Allieu Kondewa and Lahai Bangura came to perform initiations in Kale Village. Kondewa was a medicine man, not an Islamic intellectual. Lahai Bangura was an Islamic intellectual but he had no knowledge of magic herbs. They were able to obtain great strength by combining their powers.⁷⁴

In this account Saddam Sheriff is declared to be the originator of the Kamajor initiations, and he passed his knowledge of the rites on to the medicine man Allieu Kondewa and the Islamic intellectual Lahai Bangura. As far as this narrative goes, Kondewa is just one of

those who were taught how to perform the initiations from Saddam Sheriff. I gathered accounts from other individuals, and at the very least, it appears certain that Sheriff, Kondewa, and Bangura established a shrine in Kale Village and together began performing initiations.

In addition to carrying out initiation rites, Saddam Sheriff also went to the front lines as a commander. A long-serving Kamajor said that in the early days initiators ‘did not just stay in their shrines and concentrate solely on the initiations. They also had to charge into the enemy forces and prove that they could repel bullets’.⁷⁵

Those who had been initiated and become Kamajors had to observe a number of taboos in order to maintain their power to repel bullets, such as that they must not touch any woman while they were wearing their combat clothes and that they must not steal people’s property (Hoffman 2011a: 78).

The Spread of the Kamajors in Bonthe District

The hunter militias in the region where the Kamajor societies were first created enjoyed a relationship of cooperation with the Sierra Leonean armed forces. Kamajors who had been initiated collaborated with the SLA and began to push the rebels back. This happened around May 1995. Young men mobilised by the SLA were used as scouts to seek out rebels. In other cases, they would capture rebels and deliver them to the army. They also went on patrols in groups of around 25 men in order to maintain local security. However, the SLA did not provide them with arms, and the hunter-militias were only authorised to use single-barrel guns. The local youths thus armed themselves with cutlasses, knives and boat paddles (TRC 3A 2004: 213–214). Even though they were so lightly armed, they were still able to push the RUF out of the Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom, in which Kale Village is located.

Rumour of these youths spread throughout Bonthe District. The rumour ‘consisted of information about the development of Kamajors, armed with cutlasses and knives and rumoured to have mystical powers, who were coming together to restore peace in their villages in the Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom’ (Smith et al. 2004: 434). Hearing word of this rumour, people from the district began to come

to Kale Village to receive the initiation after being sent by the traditional authorities in their respective chiefdoms. For example, internally displaced people in the town of Bonthe were mobilised by the town chief. It is said that these displaced people from various chiefdoms throughout Sierra Leone were called upon to provide young people to fight. Three hundred of the assembled youths were sent to Kale to receive the initiation rites.

By November that year, two chiefdoms around Kwamebai Krim – Nongoba Bullom and Yawbeko Chiefdoms – were also free of the rebels (Smith et al. 2004: 434–435). By early 1996, the rebels had been driven out of almost every part of Bonthe District. There were no more organised operations on the part of the RUF, and the remaining combatants were able to do no more than wander around in search of food.

The Organisational Structure of the Kamajors

The Kamajors that originated in Bonthe District acted such that their own chiefdoms were at the core of the operations, but they cooperated with each other in a manner that went beyond the traditional chiefdom boundaries. An individual who was knowledgeable of events at that time explained the structure of the organisation to me.

According to him, a command structure in the Kamajor societies was put in place based on administrative divisions including chiefdoms and sections. The Kamajors in each chiefdom would form a single unit called an Action Group, or ‘AG’ for short, and a ‘chief commander’ would be designated to lead the Action Group. An individual who was a chief commander of one of the Action Groups in this region gave the following account:

I was the leader of the AG in the Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom because I was from a ruling family and I could use a gun as well and had experience of hunting. Sometimes we cooperated with the SLA as an AG and went out on mop-up operations. Each chiefdom had a leader, and he was responsible for working with the SLA. If the army needed more men, they would let us know in writing. So, the leader in each chiefdom had to be literate.⁷⁶

Each AG was further divided up based on sections (one of the administrative sub-divisions within a chiefdom), and these smaller units were put under the command of a section commander.

Actual military operations were carried out jointly by combatants from multiple chiefdoms. In such cases, the operation would be led by a Ground Commander, who would have to bring several chiefdoms together.⁷⁷

The basic unit for each Kamajor was therefore the chiefdom, but their operations were carried out in cooperation with multiple chiefdoms. Having been founded in Bonthe District, the Kamajors would then go on to spread throughout the entire Mende land.

* * *

This chapter has verified the following points:

1. From 1994, the RUF switched to guerrilla warfare tactics and began to attack towns and villages, often launching these attacks disguised as troops from the Sierra Leone Army. The SLA command, on the other hand, lost control of their soldiers during the course of the civil war with the result that some SLA soldiers started looting from civilians. (Such soldiers were known as ‘sobels’). Afraid of both the rebels and the SLA, the traditional authorities in the chiefdoms took the lead in organising and establishing hunter militias.

2. In 1994 to the early stages of 1995, the movement to set up hunter militias was most evident in the Bo-Kenema area. The activities of each of these hunter-militias were based around their respective chiefdoms. Regent chief, Samuel Hinga Norman, who was later prosecuted at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, was responsible for forming a hunter militia in his chiefdom in the Bo-Kenema area.

3. In 1994 to 1995, a hunter militia group purportedly bolstered by magic appeared in the Bonthe area. This was the Kamajor Society. The initiation rite to the Kamajors began with Islamic intellectuals and medicine men gathered by a number of chiefdoms working in collaboration with each other. These individuals came to be known as initiators, and initiation ceremonies started to be performed in

Kale Village. Allieu Kondewa, who was prosecuted at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, was one such initiator. It was in this way that the Kamajors (or more specifically the war Kamajors) were born. The Kamajors succeeded in driving the RUF out of the majority of Bonthe district. As a result, traditional authorities in other chiefdoms sent their young men to be initiated.

4. Around that time, the activities of the hunter militias and Kamajors were based around individual chiefdoms, but the chiefdoms would cooperate when necessary. The paramount chief of each chiefdom took on the role of leader of the hunter militia and/or Kamajors.

When looking at these developments in light of the hypothesis of this book, it could be said that this stage of the process was bringing many small PC networks based around individual chiefdoms into close proximity with each other. The traditional authorities in each chiefdom took up the reins in leading the hunter-militias. The initiators were also organised under the control of the traditional authorities. In other words, this development can be understood as being when PC networks were being formed in each chiefdom under the leadership of a paramount chief.

The Unification of Multiple PC Networks: From the Second Half of the NPRC Administration to the First Kabbah Administration (1995 to May 1997)

As seen in the previous chapter, PC networks were created based around individual chiefdoms throughout the Mende land. The networks were made within each chiefdom and the paramount chiefs were the tops of the networks. This chapter will describe the process in which those networks grew into a larger PC network. It covers the period from 1995 to May 1997, in other words from the latter half of the NPRC administration to the first Kabbah administration.

The first section demonstrates how the hunter militias began to extend beyond the boundaries of their respective chiefdoms to cooperate with each other using camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) and cities. The second section looks at how the initiation rites for the Kamajor Society expanded throughout the Mende land and that, hand-in-hand with this expansion, initiators also spread out across the region. The third section describes how a specific pattern emerged in the process leading up to initiation into the Kamajors and this, in turn, led to it becoming common practice for the paramount chiefs to make a request to the initiators to perform the rites. The fourth section explains how Kamajor groups that did not belong to individual chiefdoms appeared because initiators began to command their own units of combatants. Finally, the fifth section demonstrates how the Kamajors gradually started to show more and more cohesion as units underwent numerous mergers, resulting in the appearance of several separate large Kamajor forces.

1. Cooperation among Hunter Militias Based in Different Chiefdoms

Formed as vigilante groups in the hinterlands, the hunter militias began to cooperate across chiefdoms by making use of the cities and camps for internally displaced persons (IDP).

The Expansion of Hunter Militias via Mobilisation in IDP Camps

There were relatively few attacks by the RUF around the urban areas. People who had fled from rural areas often went to live with relatives or acquaintances who lived in cities. IDP camps were also set up near the urban areas. From around the beginning of 1995, many hunter militias expanded their area of activity, but this was only made possible by making use of the urban areas and the IDP camps to which people had fled from rural areas (Muana 1997: 78; Keen 2005: 140). Those who had previously remained in the chiefdoms to form the hunter militias, now mobilised people who were originally from the same area but had since fled the fighting to the cities or camps. They returned to their respective chiefdoms with their new recruits. The following testimony was given to the Special Court for Sierra Leone:

They, these Kamajors [hunter militias], have been overpowered by the rebels or their enemy, they will now go either to a refugee camp (sic), organise themselves and make a comeback to attack, or while they're out of this country in neighbouring country called refugee camp, they will also organise themselves. (SCSL 10 February 2006: 8)

Hunter militias were also formed in the IDP camps and cities in order to win back the chiefdoms that had fallen under the control of the RUF.

Let us now look at the mobilisations in the IDP camps. Camps were established in four places in the Mende land.⁷⁸ The people staying in each of these camps were administered to by individual chiefdoms, and someone from the traditional authority acted as a representative of the camp's inhabitants. This individual was responsible for distributing aid supplies, drawing up a list of the IDPs' names and passing on any information about the plans of the relief organisations (Muana 1997). During my fieldwork, I heard about the Gondama Displaced Camp (hereinafter referred to as 'Gondama Camp') in Kakua Chiefdom, which was located a few kilometres from Bo Town.

Gondama Camp was set up in early 1993. The site was formerly a camp at which soldiers from the Guinean and Nigerian military

were stationed. The Sierra Leonean Army then used it to house IDPs who had fled from Pujehun District. It was thus transformed into a place for displaced persons to live. From 1994 onwards, when the RUF switched their tactics to guerrilla warfare, Gondama Camp became a place for IDPs from all over the Mende land, not just from Pujehun (Smith et al. 2004: 387, 497–500).

I heard an account from a man who used to live in the camp. He said that it was managed and run by NGOs. The camp's inhabitants were organised so that the work of administering the camp could be performed efficiently, and the individual given the task of acting as the representative of all the displaced persons was called the chairman. His role was to act as a link between the relief organisations and IDPs. Beneath him was a deputy chairman and a secretary, and they worked to unify all the IDPs. Below them were groups organised around each District, namely Bo District, Kenema District, Moyamba District, Kailahun District, Bonthe District and Pujehun District. Then the IDPs were divided up according to their chiefdoms, in other words they were managed based on where they used to live.⁷⁹

As the inhabitants of the camp were administered according to their chiefdoms, it was easy to share information about events that occurred within their particular chiefdoms. If someone brought information to the representative of a chiefdom in the camp, that person would disseminate it to the other inhabitants. Furthermore, if someone living in the camp went to the city, he or she would invariably pass on that information to other people from the same chiefdom. Sometimes news spread in the form of rumours. One Kamajor told me the following with regard to the mobilisation of hunter militias in the cities and IDP camps.

At the time, there were refugee camps (sic) in Bo and Kenema, there were people representing the various chiefdoms there. When we told them that we needed manpower, and where people should go if they wanted to join, they would pass this on to the people. It would spread by word of mouth. Word spread, and we would get the personnel.⁸⁰

Samuel Hinga Norman and the Hunter Militias

At around the time that the mobilisation of hunter militias had started in the cities and IDP camps, Hinga Norman, who had been living in Bo ever since the Telu Massacre, joined in the movement to form larger units of hunter militia by collaborating with the chiefdoms around Bo Town. When the nearby chiefdoms joined together to form hunter militias, Hinga Norman took a role in organising them. According to Keen, ‘some 18 of the surviving guard [from the Telu Massacre] went to form the core of what became a powerful defence force centered on Bo’ under the leadership of Hinga Norman (Keen 2005: 133). By mid-1995, Hinga Norman had emerged as a leading figure who ‘played a key role in building up the civil defence’ (Keen 2005: 111).

However, he was not the leader of the hunter militias; rather, with several chiefdoms cooperating with each other, he was just one of the people who made decisions. The following excerpt is a summary of some testimony given at the Special Court for Sierra Leone:

Lebbie Lagbeyor, the paramount chief of Komboya Chiefdom, was in leadership position [in the alliance of hunter militias which Norman had joined]. However, Lagbeyor was killed in a fracas with the Sierra Leone armed forces in 1996. After that, paramount chiefs from the Bo, Moyamba, and Pujehun Districts came together to decide a new leader, and they selected a new chairman. It was Norman whom they chose. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 10–11, summarised by the author)

This testimony indicates that an alliance of hunter militias that extended beyond the individual chiefdoms was being formed, and that its decision making was carried out by a committee comprising the paramount chiefs from the chiefdoms involved. At the time of the committee’s formation, it is possible that Hinga Norman took a part in the decision-making process. In March 1996, the Kabbah administration came into power and Norman was made Deputy Minister of Defence, but even then he still maintained contact in secret with the hunter militias around Bo. Many Kamajors have said that Norman often visited Bo even after becoming the Deputy Minister.

The above narratives reveal the Kamajors' repeated attempts to collaborate across chiefdoms, and these efforts may be seen as the process by which the PC networks based around individual chiefdoms began integrating.

2. The Spread of Initiations and Proliferation of Initiators

Another development that took place between 1995 and 1996 was the spread of initiations into the Kamajor Society across the whole Mende society, which in turn led to it becoming norm for members of the Mende hunter militias to receive initiation rites. The majority of combatants in the Mende hunter militias now joined the Kamajor Society, and they began referring to themselves as 'Kamajors'. The initiation rituals were carried out by initiators at the request of the paramount chiefs.

The Spread of the Kamajors in the Mende Land

As seen in the previous chapter, the initiation rites of the Kamajors started in Kale Village in Bonthe District in the first half of 1995. The Kamajors who were initiated then went on to drive out the RUF from Bonthe by 1996. With this success, rumours about these Kamajors started to swirl through the Mende land, and 'the rumours spread like wildfire' as one former Kamajor said.⁸¹

Having received word of the Kamajors' success in Bonthe, several paramount chiefs declared they wanted to introduce the initiation rites to the Bo-Kenema area as well. They invited initiators from Kale Village and made their hunter militias go through the initiation (Hoffman 2011a: 40). Testimony later given at the Special Court for Sierra Leone stated, 'the paramount chiefs and their sub-chiefs in most chiefdoms invited these initiators to their chiefdoms to immunise the already formed chiefdom Kamajors and paid for them' (SCSL 10 February 2006: 14). The existing Mende hunter militias then received the initiation rites and became members of the Kamajor Society. It also became common practice for new recruits in the hunter militias to go through the initiation. This was how the Mende hunter militias in general came to be called 'Kamajors'. Those who had been initiated also began to call themselves Kamajors.⁸²

From here on in this book I will use the term 'Kamajor(s)' when referring to the Mende hunter militias.

With the increase in personnel being initiated, the initiators in Kale Village began to require extra help. Each initiator began to acquire assistants who were also either herbalists or Islamic intellectuals. An initiator and his assistants were collectively called a 'cabinet', and each cabinet performed the initiation rites under the lead of the initiator. The cabinets had to have both Islamic intellectuals (either *karamoko* or *morimen*) and herbalists serving on them. Doctor Massallay, who first served as an assistant to Allieu Kondewa and later worked independently as an initiator, related the following to me:

Saddam Sheriff's Cabinet was made up of four Islamic intellectuals and two herbalists. The cabinet members did not just act as assistants for the initiation ritual, but also went to the battle zone as commanders.⁸³

Saddam Sheriff's Expedition

With the increasing popularity of the initiations, requests for the initiators also mushroomed. Prior to 1996, initiators would make trips from Kale Village to carry out initiations elsewhere, but with the burgeoning number of people seeking initiation, they spread out across the Mende land and established their shrines.

One of the first examples of this was the expedition by Saddam Sheriff. Taking command of a group of Kamajors, he left Kale and went on a foray to Bo. It is said that after reaching Bo, he established a shrine there and began conducting initiations. Doctor Massallay, an initiator and Kondewa's right-hand man, gave the following description of the expedition.

Saddam Sheriff travelled to Bo. When he arrived there, one member of his cabinet, Doctor Jibeo, went back to Kale Village. However, Saddam Sheriff stayed in Bo with Kamoh Brima Bangura, who was another member of his cabinet. They built a shrine and began performing initiations there.⁸⁴

With Saddam Sheriff establishing his shrine in Bo and remaining there on a permanent basis, it made it easier for the people living in the city and IDP camps to get access to the initiation ritual, and as a result even more members of the hunter militias came to be initiated. The account below reveals the experiences of Abu Bakar Kamara, one of the Kamajors who went with Saddam Sheriff to Bo. The narrative also includes details of what happened to him after he was driven away from where he was initially living.

I was caught up in the civil war when I was studying at an Islamic school [He was about 13 at the time]. I was going to an Islamic school in Gallines Perri Chiefdom in Pujehun District. One day, the army came and said, 'The rebels will soon be here. Civilians can't stay here' and we were forced to move. We put the bare minimum of what we needed, such as clothes, on our heads and we all walked to the Gondama Camp [on the outskirts of Bo]. I think it took us about a week to reach it.⁸⁵ While I was living in the camp, I heard some rumours about the Kamajors. It was said that they were driving back the rebels. I decided to become a Kamajor. I left the camp with my friends and came to Gbandapi in Pujehun District, where Saddam Sheriff was said to be living. But when we got there, we were told that he was no longer there. We were advised to go to Kale Village, so we headed there. [...] We underwent the initiation in Kale and became Kamajors. After that, we went with Saddam Sheriff to Bo. When we arrived there, we began living in the Gondama Camp again. I arranged for people from the same chiefdom as me who were now living in the camp to meet Saddam Sheriff, and they went on to be initiated. They became Kamajors. I headed back to my chiefdom with them and we drove out the rebels. After that, we began to live in the chiefdom again, but I wanted to be with Saddam Sheriff, so I spent the time going back and forth between the chiefdom and Bo.⁸⁶

After Saddam Sheriff built his shrine in Bo, Abu Bakar Kamara, the narrator, persuaded people from his chiefdom who were then living in the Gondama camp to undergo the initiation. His account proves that the mobilisation of Kamajors spread through the camps.

At the time, Norman and his hunter militia that were operating in Bo were also initiated by Saddam Sheriff. Abu Bakar Kamara also related the following:

Hinga Norman was initiated after we had arrived. Saddam Sheriff was the first initiator to perform initiations in Bo. Hinga Norman and his hunter militia were among the first to be initiated by Saddam Sheriff.⁸⁷

According to Abu Bakar Kamara, Norman frequently came to meet Saddam Sheriff even after he had been initiated.

Samuel Hinga Norman and the Spread of Initiations

It is said that Norman spread and popularised the initiation ritual as he strongly believed in the supernatural powers and their ability to repel bullets. In testimony at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Norman himself outlined his faith in this power.

The simplest form of immunisation in the western world is the bullet-proof garment. In the olden days the warriors wear iron shield. The iron shield of the initiated Kamajor is a means by which nothing is worn, but one is safe by missile from head to sole. And I received that one. I am sure of it, I am convinced of it and I am proud of it. (SCSL 27 January 2006: 46)

Several leading figures in the Kamajors/CDF also told me that Norman believed in the power of the initiation from the bottom of his heart and that the initiations spread because he recommended them.

Hinga Norman furthermore asked the initiators to perform initiations in his chiefdom, not in their shrines. He also got the hunter militias from other chiefdoms to undergo the initiation rites in his chiefdom. As example of this, in *Conflict Mapping*, it is recorded that in September 1996 young men from Wandor Chiefdom in Kenema District underwent their initiations in Jiamia Bongor Chiefdom (Norman's chiefdom) (Smith et al. 2004: 315). Furthermore, in the

course of my fieldwork, I met some Kamajors who said they been initiated by Allieu Kondewa in Norman's chiefdom.

Accounts provided by the initiators themselves also reveal that Norman invited the initiators and requested that they carry out the initiations in his chiefdom. Kondewa's assistant, Doctor Massallay, gave the following description of the first time that he was involved with Norman.

It was when Hinga Norman was still regent chief. He was training the young people [in order to fight the RUF]. However, there were many casualties due to the rebel attacks. [...] In order to strengthen his forces, Norman sent a messenger to us. At that time, Allieu Kondewa, Kamoh Boni, Doctor Jibeo, Aliu Sesay and Kamoh Fuward had gone to Bo as well as myself. After we initiated the people there, we returned to Kale Village.⁸⁸

It would appear that the point in time that they were called upon to perform these initiations was after Hinga Norman had himself been initiated by Saddam Sheriff. This also demonstrates that Hinga Norman actively worked to propagate the initiation rituals.

Even after he was made Deputy Minister of Defence in the Kabbah administration, Norman still worked to spread the initiations, which can be glimpsed through evidence given at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In 1996, the paramount chiefs in Kenema District gathered for a conference. Norman, who had by then been appointed Deputy Minister, was also in attendance. Among the paramount chiefs at the meeting was one from Dodo Chiefdom. This chiefdom had formed a hunter militia in 1993 after being attacked by the RUF. It did not coordinate with any of the other chiefdoms, and it was under the command of the paramount chief. The testimony below relating to the conference in 1996 was given by the leading Kamajor in Dodo Chiefdom at the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

Prosecutor:

You just mentioned initiation by way of becoming a Kamajor in 1996 [at the conference]. Who introduced this idea of initiation?

Witness:

The initiation was first heard of from Chief Hinga Norman when he went to Kenema and addressed a meeting. That was in 1996.

Prosecutor:

Can you remember the month in 1996 that Hinga Norman went to Kenema?

Witness:

In September 1996.

(omitted)

Prosecutor:

Mr. Witness, when Hinga Norman introduced the idea of initiation to you at that meeting in Kenema, what did he say about initiation?

Witness:

He said by being initiated one would be protected from bombs and bullets from the enemies.

Prosecutor:

Was the initiation process supposed to have any other benefit for Kamajors?

Witness:

Yes, sir, once being initiated, according to him, all of us would belong to a societal group. The Kamajor organisation was now based on society.

Prosecutor:

How was this idea received in Kenema?

Witness:

The idea of initiation was overwhelmingly received by all Kamajors in that district.

(omitted)

Prosecutor:

Were any arrangements made at that meeting as to when initiations would begin -to- start in Kenema?

Witness:

Yes, sir. After his [Norman's] return, he would send the initiation (sic, initiator) that would be based in Kenema; that is one late Mualemu Saddam Sheriff. (SCSL 26 May 2005: 10–11)

This testimony reveals that Norman played a leading role in popularising the initiations. It also suggests that after becoming

Deputy Minister of Defence, Norman wielded some influence over the initiators.

Incidentally, it was Saddam Sheriff who built the shrine at Kenema at the request of Norman. Sheriff had moved from Bo to Kenema in September 1996. He continued to perform initiations in Kenema until his death in 1997 (SCSL 26 May 2005: 10–11).

As has been verified thus far, the initiations that began in the Bonthe region gradually spread throughout the Mende land. Although it is thought that the initiations became more popular due to the military successes of the Kamajors, it cannot be denied that Hinga Norman also gave them his support. He believed in the effects of the initiations and he recommended their adoption across the Mende land. The spread of the initiations accelerated further when he took up the post of Deputy Minister of Defence. As he actively requested that the initiations be carried out, the initiators such as Allieu Kondewa and Saddam Sheriff came to have strong connections with Norman.

The Spread of Initiators from Kale Village

By the first half of 1996, the Kamajors in Kale Village had transferred their base to Tihun, which is a town in Sogbini Chiefdom in Bonthe District and about 20 km from Kale as the crow flies. The two initiators who had devised the initiations, Allieu Kondewa and Lahai Bangura, also moved to Tihun and established a new shrine there. Saddam Sheriff had already gone to Bo at this point (Smith et al. 2004: 440).

It is said that the reason the Kamajors moved their base from Kale was to get the attention of the central government and obtain its support.⁸⁹ In January 1996, a palace coup took place in Freetown, and Valentine Strasser was replaced as head of state by Julius Maada Bio. In short, Maada Bio, who was Strasser's second-in-command in the NPRC, forced his boss out. At the time, Strasser had been dragging his feet on a transfer to a civilian-led government. In the February after Strasser being ousted, elections aimed at transition to a civil administration went ahead as scheduled. Maada Bio was the head of state from the place coup to the establishment of democratically elected government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in

March, 1996. Maada Bio was from Tihun, and he belonged to a ruling family in Sogbini Chieftdom. It is said that in order to attract the attention of Maada Bio, the Kamajors moved their base to Tihun.

Soon after moving to Tihun, the initiator, Lahai Bangura, left and set up a new shrine in Bo. It was run jointly with another initiator, Mama Munda Fortune (Photograph 7-1).⁹⁰ She was the only female initiator who had recently risen to prominence. She was a herbalist who lived in Bonthe District, but had no relationship whatsoever with the Kamajors in Kale Village. However, she gradually became involved with the Kamajors there. Below is how Mama Munda herself described the event that led her to becoming an initiator.

I was kidnapped by a Kassela spirit.⁹¹ The Kassela took me away into the bush. When I opened my eyes, I was at the feet of the Kassela. It was sleeping. From that time, I gained the power to protect the bodies of young men from bullets. (Hoffman 2011c: 224)

She told this way to an anthropologist, Danny Hoffman. On the other hand, Doctor Massallay, Kondewa's right-hand man, told me about a different course of events that led to Mama Munda becoming an initiator.

The Kamajor wore amulets for protection, and they had to observe certain rules to maintain the magic power of the amulets. They kept bringing amulets that had lost their magic power to us. There were so many of them that Kondewa decided to ask for the same amount of money to fix them as it cost to hold an initiation. When he did that, lots of the Kamajors took their amulets to Mama Munda. She fixed them cheaply, and thereby got the trust of the Kamajors. We determined that Mama Munda had sufficient power, so we welcomed her as an initiator.⁹²

After relating this account, Doctor Massallay went on to add that normally women could not get involved with the Kamajors. However, as Mama Munda was so old she could no longer become pregnant, so they decided that they need not regard her as a woman, and thus they could accept her as an initiator.

Photograph 7-1: Mama Munda and a Kamajor



(Provided by Danny Hoffman)

After Mama Munda was brought in as an initiator, she ran the new shrine built in Bo with Lahai Bangura. However, the two soon parted company and set up separate shrines on the outskirts of Bo.

Allieu Kondewa, on the other hand, remained in Tihun. He did not just perform initiations there as he often made trips in answer to requests to perform initiations in other areas. The three initiators who had started the initiation rituals in Kale Village now had separate shrines in different locations. Saddam Sheriff built his in Kenema (having moved from Bo to Kenema), Lahai Bangura's shrine was in Bo and Allieu Kondewa had his in Tifun.

There were other initiators who established shrines besides these three, as their assistants also struck out on their own and started running shrines in various locations. Saddam Sheriff's assistant, Moalem Shuahibu Sheriff, set up a shrine in Pujehun District. One of Kondewa's assistants, Kamoh Kowa, built a shrine in Gbado in Kandu Leppiam Chiefdom in Kenema District and Doctor Massaley, who was another of Kondewa's assistants, left the Mende land and

established a shrine at Masingbi in Tonkolili District. Doctor Massallay himself said that Kondewa received a request to perform some initiations in the northern province, but he was sent in Kondewa's place.⁹³ Doctor Massallay initiated people from the Temne, Kuranko and Limba ethnic groups, but those whom he initiated did not call themselves 'Kamajors' but 'Gbethi', which was the word used for the hunter militia in the northern province.⁹⁴

The Emergence of New Initiators

In 1996, at the same time that the initiators and their assistants in Kale Village were dispersing to other parts of the country, other initiators who were unconnected to Kale also appeared. They were Islamic intellectuals and herbalists who began to perform initiations independently. I interviewed one such initiator, Sheik Mohammed Abdullahaman Kabbah (I call him 'Sheik Kabbah' in short).

Sheik Kabbah was an Islamic intellectual, as was his father. According to Sheik Kabbah, his father opened an Islamic school in Bandajuma in the Sowa Chiefdom of Pujehun District. After studying at this school, Sheik Kabbah went to continue his studies at a different Islamic school in Kenema. He then moved around studying at Islamic schools in Mauritania, Morocco and Dar es Salaam before he eventually came back to Sierra Leone when he was around 30 years old. He said that after returning to Sierra Leone he lived in Kenema and that several years passed between his return and becoming an initiator. What follows below is Sheik Kabbah's own account of his experiences.

In 1996, when towns in Kenema were first attacked, I stopped the bullets with the power of the Koran and protected the people. The power of the Koran can also stop bullets. Imagine I have poured holy water here [he points to the surface of the desk]. By doing this, bullets won't come. My power is superior to that of the witch doctors. My power is not a mix of Islam and witchcraft like them, mine is pure Islam. After I protected the towns in Kenema, I received a request from the chiefs. 'You can freely control the power of the Koran, so will you carry out initiations for the Kamajors?' I agreed. I first performed an initiation in Nongowa Chiefdom.⁹⁵

After that, he went to various chiefdoms upon request and performed initiations in Kenema District, Kailahun District and Kono District.

It can be seen here that the Kamajor initiation rituals spread throughout the Mende land and more and more members of the Mende hunter militias were joining the Kamajor Society. Following the increase in demand for initiations, initiators in Kale Village spread out to other areas and they began to conduct initiations in response to requests from paramount chiefs. New initiators also emerged who had no prior connection to Kale Village.

3. The Increase of Kamajors and the Emergence of a Formalised Pattern of Mobilisation

Once the initiations spread, the procedures to become a Kamajor began to follow certain patterns. These patterns are looked at below.

The Emergence of a Formalised Pattern of Kamajor Mobilisation

To become a Kamajor, authorisation from the paramount chief was first required. As each chiefdom was relatively large, the paramount chief did not know everybody, so in effect the section chiefs and town chiefs would recommend potential Kamajors to the paramount chief for approval. Those who were then approved by the paramount chief would go to the shrine of an initiator. The initiator would perform the initiation at the request of the paramount chief, and when the ritual came to a close, the newly initiated Kamajors would be handed over to the paramount chief (they would in fact return home by themselves).

The reason that they needed approval from the paramount chief was to verify the lineage of the people who were trying to become Kamajors and prevent outsiders receiving the initiation rites. Those living in the urban areas and IDP camps who wished to become Kamajors also went through the same procedures. Below are several accounts of the process. The first example is from an individual who had taken refuge in an IDP camp after being recommended by his paramount chief.

I joined the Kamajors in 1996. At the time, my chiefdom had fallen into the hands of the rebels. I was living in a camp for displaced persons in Bo with some other people. Eight paramount chiefs decided to gather a total of 100 young men at the camp and I was chosen then. I was taken to an initiator who initiated me, and I became a Kamajor.⁹⁶

Another account was a man who took a refuge in the city of Bo before becoming a Kamajor. He was also recommended by a paramount chief who was living in a camp for displaced persons.

I was living in a town called Girehun in Boama Chiefdom, but the rebels turned up. I fled from Girehun and went to stay with some relatives in Bo. I lived there for about two years. During that time, Boama Chiefdom came under the control of the rebels. The chiefdom's leaders [who were by now in the camp for displaced persons] ordered each of the eight sections of the chiefdom to produce 25 young men. In total, 200 youths were assembled. Living in Bo, I also joined. The 200 young men, including me, were taken to Kamoh Lahai Bangura's place, where we received the initiation rites.⁹⁷

These narratives are made by those who escaped from their own chiefdoms. On the other hand, urban dwellers who had lived in cities became Kamajors by visiting chiefdoms of their parents' origin. Cities have a certain amount of anonymity. Therefore, the paramount chiefs whose territory included urban areas could not ensure if the people who had moved there from other areas were trustworthy or not. People who had migrated to the cities would therefore return to their original chiefdoms and get the approval of the paramount chief there in order to join the Kamajors. In Sierra Leone, one's original chiefdom is the place where one's father was born and raised. People living in the cities would trace back their origins and go to receive the approval of the paramount chief in the chiefdom their fathers were from (however, it is said that the mother's chiefdom – that is to say the chiefdom in which one's mother was born and raised – was also acceptable). In other words, approval would be given as long as an individual's identity could be checked. The narrator of the following account was living in a city but returned to his original chiefdom

where he used to live and received authorisation from the paramount chief there after being screened.

[I became a Kamajor around the time that rumours about them were beginning to spread]. At the time, my father had just been killed by the rebels, so I was thinking of becoming a Kamajor. You had to be recommended by your chief to become a Kamajor, so I went back to the chiefdom that I was originally from and had an interview for selection. [...] The chief chose Mama Munda [the initiator]. I didn't choose the initiator myself. But I knew her magic was powerful, so I had no problem with that choice.⁹⁸

The narrator added that he was living in the city at that time and his job was bringing in palm oil from farming communities and selling it in the city. It was then that he said he made the decision to become a Kamajor.

The next case is of an individual who visited the chiefdom his parents were from and received approval to become a Kamajor from the paramount chief there. The narrator was a 16-year-old youth when the events in the narrative took place.

I was living in Bo back then. I got a recommendation to become a Kamajor from Kamajei Chiefdom. Both of my parents were from there, and I stayed there during school holidays. I walked from Bo as far as Senahun [the centre of Kamajei Chiefdom]. It's not that far. You can get there in a day. [...] I got approval from the paramount chief by going to the town chief of Senahun. Kamajei Chiefdom needed a lot of young men. I went with the other men who had been approved to Mama Munda's place and was initiated.⁹⁹

To become a Kamajor, it was necessary to receive the approval of the paramount chief of the chiefdom from which potential Kamajors originally came from. This approval was a measure put in place to ensure that strangers did not slip in. However, experience of actually living in that chiefdom was not required. It is said that if either of one's parents was raised in that chiefdom it was sufficient proof of identity.¹⁰⁰

The narratives above confirm that from some time in 1996, a pattern emerged in the process to become a Kamajor, namely that individuals who had first received the approval of the paramount chief would then go to an initiator and receive the initiation rites.¹⁰¹

The Increasing Influence of the Kamajors

The number of Kamajors across the Mende land increased, and with that came more influence. The Kamajors in the Bonthe area remained active even after the rebels had been driven out of the district (between the latter half of 1995 and 1996) (Smith et al. 2004: 437-438). Over time, the Kamajors became more and more oppressive and egregious violations of human rights emerged. They established checkpoints in many areas to maintain order and civilians at these checkpoints were sometimes subjected to violence for arbitrary reasons such as not having any form of identification or a pass. The account below was recorded by the anthropologist Caspar Fithen in 1997 from an NGO worker who was Mende in origin. This NGO worker asked for a ride on a Kamajor's car for a long-distance journey. He said that he went through eight check points of Kamajors.

At the checkpoint at the village of Pujehun we found some aggressive arguments involving tribalism. Fortunately, the Temne boy that I spoke to was able to speak good Mende and this saved him. His brother was not able to and this is why he was killed. At the last checkpoint at Lago [in Kenema District] I met a girl by the name of Haja who had been 'trapped' by Kamajors. They told me that she was the wife of a soldier. They were being really rough with her so I tried to find a Kamajor who had some 'experience of education'. I told him that she was just a peaceful citizen, an innocent civilian – why should she be killed? It is the husband that is the soldier, she is just a wife to the husband. During this conversation, they came to realise that I was an 'outreach' worker. As a result of this they said, 'OK, we're going to let her go — we don't want you going down to Kenema and telling everyone that we're killing people'. (Fithen 1999: 219)

Crackdowns like this often led to oppressive acts by the Kamajors. It is said that at one checkpoint, a cage of thorns was set up in which to detain people (Smith et al. 2004: 437). Adult males also sometimes became Kamajors in order to protect themselves from the violence and oppression perpetrated by other Kamajors (Smith et al. 2004: 437–438).

4. The Establishment of Combat Units Led by Initiators

In the civil war leading up to the first half of 1996, the Kamajors were based around chiefdoms and led by the paramount chiefs. However, some initiators then started to command Kamajor units and function as the heads of PC networks, and the Kamajors began to move away from the control of the paramount chiefs.

New PC networks: Units under the Control of Initiators

Around the time that the initiators from Kale Village dispersed to other locations and new initiators appeared (the period from the latter half of 1996 to the first half of 1997), several initiators appeared who led their own units of combatants, and these were different from the units that had previously been commanded by initiators. For example, Saddam Sheriff, who was both an initiator and a commander, was part of the alliance of chiefdoms made in Kale Village. In contrast, the units of the new initiators who emerged during this time were independent of the chiefdoms. Initiations were performed at the request of the paramount chiefs, and once they were over, the Kamajors would normally be sent back to their chiefdoms. However, some Kamajors would stay and operate under the initiator once they had been initiated. Some initiators used these Kamajors to form their own personal units, putting themselves at the top. This meant that in addition to the PC networks headed by the paramount chiefs, PC networks headed by initiators were also created.

Well-known examples of these include Mama Munda's Kassela War Council and Kamoh Monuru's¹⁰² Born Naked Brigade (cf. Hoffman 2011a: 77).¹⁰³

One Kamajor offered the following explanation for the course of events that led up to these initiators having their own combat units.

The initiators wanted looted goods. The Kamajors stole things during the war, and the Kamajor commanders would loot whatever they wanted. The initiators saw this happening and wanted to do the same thing. That's why they started to have their own units.¹⁰⁴

Initiations Become a Formality

From the latter half of 1996 to around the first half of 1997, initiations came to be carried out on a larger scale but in a more curtailed format.¹⁰⁵ Initiations normally used to last between two and three weeks, but from some point in the first Kabbah administration, some rituals were completed in just two or three days or even one night. One Kamajor who was initiated during this period described it as a sham. He described what happened as follows.

I don't know about the other initiators, but Lahai Bangura was a fraud. People who don't know anything say this and that about the initiations, but at Lahai Bangura's place there wasn't a single thing done that even resembled a rite. We just danced together for a day ... no, a night. After we had danced all night, the next day we put on clothes with amulets on them and were lined up in public. Then guns were fired at us to prove that nothing would happen to us. Then we were told, 'You are now Kamajors'.¹⁰⁶

Normally, information that is learnt within a society must not be leaked to the outside, and even during my fieldwork I was unable to learn the finer points of the initiation rites from those who had joined the Kamajor Society. The only individual who gave an account of the form of his initiation was this one who described it as a sham.

It was also around this time that initiations came to be carried out for a large number of people in one go. These were the beginning of 'mass initiations'. At the initiations held in Kale Village in the early days, there were only between four and six initiates (TRC 3A 2004: 218). In contrast, during the latter half of 1996, it became common for over 100 people to be initiated in a single go. After the ritual, the newly initiated Kamajors would line up in single row in front of the people and they would receive a hail of bullets; if nothing happened to them, it would be taken as proof that they had taken on magical

powers. A Kamajor who was initiated by Mama Munda said the following:

One day [right in the middle of the initiation], all the people being initiated were called together and checked if they were suited to fighting. We were shot at with guns. If we were keeping to the rules, we were protected and there would be no problem. No one was injured. This was how they checked whether or not we could go to battle.¹⁰⁷

Photograph 7-2 shows a scene from a mass initiation performed by Sheik Kabbah. The person on the farthest left of the four people in the foreground is Sheik Kabbah.¹⁰⁸ Behind them can be seen the line of Kamajors who had just been initiated. Sheik Kabbah told me that this picture was taken after the test by gunfire to see if they had taken on magical powers.

Photograph 7-2: Photograph taken during mass initiation



(From the personal collection of Sheik Kabbah)

Another major change that emerged in the period from the second half of 1996 to the early half of 1997 was that the typical pattern of mobilisation that had developed up to that point began to disintegrate. In other words, the norm of being initiated after

receiving the approval of paramount chiefs began to collapse and potential Kamajors were now able to be initiated without going through their chiefdoms. The following two accounts were collected from Kamajors. In the first, the narrator visited an initiator by himself in order to receive the initiation rites.

[Around the time of the first Kabbah administration] I became a Kamajor in order to defend the country as a citizen of Sierra Leone. I covered the cost of the initiation with my own money and underwent the ritual. It was around the time that people started to get initiated without going through their chiefdoms. It was Mama Munda who performed my initiation.¹⁰⁹

The following account describes how a Kamajor commander made a request to an initiator to perform an initiation. It was narrated by a Kamajor who had received the initiation.

Before entering the Kamajor, I was an irregular soldier in the Sierra Leonean Army. One day, I was captured by some civilians as I was suspected of being a spy and they beat me. The people who caught me were discussing how to kill me. I was taken to a crossroads to be made an example of. At that moment, a Kamajor commander came passing by and he saved me. I was given clothes and taken to his house. When I told him that I wanted to leave that town and asked him for his help, I was told that if I became a Kamajor my safety would be guaranteed even in there. I was taken to the person in charge of initiations and became a Kamajor.¹¹⁰

The custom of going to an initiator after receiving the approval of the paramount chief of the chiefdom of one's origin was thus breaking down.

5. The Kamajors Organising across Chiefdoms

In the early stages, the Kamajors were based around individual chiefdoms and organised under the traditional authority there, but little by little they moved away from that. As separate Kamajor units began cooperating with each other beyond the oversight of the chiefdoms, a number of powerful Kamajor groups appeared. In other words, from the multitude of small PC networks emerged some that grew into larger PC networks through mergers, and some of these Kamajor groups broke free from the control of the paramount chiefs. The result was an abundance of various Kamajor forces both large and small. This section describes two large Kamajor groups, neither of which had included the paramount chief with decision-making rights. Both examples are based research by Fithen (Fithen 1999).

A Kamajor Group that Expanded by Appealing for Volunteers

The first case is a Kamajor group that was led by a Kamajor, a man called Eddie Massallay. When the Kamajors were no longer necessarily based around a single chiefdom, there was no need for Kamajor combatants to remain in a single Kamajor group. They began to make frequent moves to different Kamajor groups, looking for the one that best suited their situation. During this time, Eddie Massallay's organisation absorbed many such combatants and grew into a major force. It further expanded by deploying on joint operations with the SLA; the support it received from the SLA in the form of weapons and resources were substantial attractions that helped draw in more Kamajor fighters.

Eddie Massallay became the leader of this Kamajor group because he was previously the liaison officer in charge of connecting the Kamajor with the SLA. This meant that he was in an excellent position to distribute resources and aid received from the SLA to subordinate Kamajors.

Even before the civil war began, Eddie Massallay had already acquired military experience. He was from the Soro Gbema Chiefdom, which is on the border with Liberia, in Pujehun District. The Mende who live in this area used to be under the rule of the Vai Kingdom, located in present day Liberia. At some point in the past,

the Vai Kingdom lost a war with the Mende and the people in the present Soro Gbema Chiefdom came under the control of the Mende. From then on, they called themselves Mende and began to speak the Mende language.¹¹¹ However, even after assimilation into the Mende, they maintained connections with their Vai relatives and, as a result even in the 1980s, there were many who would use those connections to go to Liberia as migrant labour. In such cases, they would rent the homes of their relatives there and call themselves Liberians.¹¹² Eddie Massallay was no exception; in the first half of the 1980s, he was employed with the Special Security Service (SSS), which was Liberia's armed police force, and said he worked as a security officer at the Executive Mansion, which was the official residence of the Liberian president. It was there that he acquired military experience. After being caught up in the First Liberian Civil War (1989-1996), he decided to go back to Sierra Leone. Upon his return, he set up a business exporting diamonds and lumber from Kailahun and Pujehun Districts. However, when Sierra Leone was also embroiled in a civil war, he decided to become a Kamajor and was initiated by Lahai Bangura.¹¹³ After becoming a liaison officer, he went on to lead a large group of Kamajors in Bo District up to 1997.

The anthropologist Caspar Fithen wrote several pages about the activities of the Kamajor led by Eddie (Fithen 1999: 210–223). He states that there were large Kamajor forces in Bo and Kenema, and the leader of the one in Bo was Eddie Massallay. The following is a summary of Fithen's account.

The Bo *kamajoisia* (sic) have some noticeably different characteristics from their Kenema counterparts [Kenema Kamajors] [...] The organisation also has its own Kamor, Eddy Massalley (sic).¹¹⁴ In January 1997, there was fighting between the two groups over an RUF diamond cache, which left several kamajoisia dead. The diamonds, thought to have originated in Tongo Field, were eventually seized by the Bo kamajoisia, leaving the Kenema leadership deeply bitter about their perceived loss. Both groups have continued to view one another with some suspicion. The Bo kamajoisia are widely reputed to be the more powerful in terms of the supernatural. [...] Interestingly, the Bo kamajoisia are widely perceived as acolytes of a far less rigorous 'lore'

and, commonly, many of the senior figures enjoy projecting themselves as big drinkers, jamba smokers and swityays, all of which was anathema to the more conservative followers of the Kenema rite. One leading Bo *kamajo* (sic), an Organisational Commander, was interviewed in a Kenema bar immediately after the battle for Tongo Field [...]. Both he and an associate went out of their way to portray a kind of 'Bush Lad' image, bragging about numerous girlfriends and lengthy drinking sessions, certainly contrary to cultural expectations of chastity, abstinence and piety.[...] Throughout the early half of 1997, the Bo kamajoisia frequently appeared to be generally better equipped than their Kenema counterparts. A greater proportion of fighters were dressed in the traditional *ronko* cloth tunics, which in the context of the kamajo lore, invest the wearer with the supernatural powers outlined above.[...] These differences may reflect the extra political and financial assistance given to the Bo kamajoisia by their paramount leader, Deputy Defence Minister, Sam Hinga Norman. Norman is believed to have substantial gold and diamond mining interests in Bagbe, Baoma and Valunia Chiefdoms¹¹⁵, although he has remained consistently reluctant to advertise his personal involvement with the industry. (Fithen 1999: 214–215)

In order to obtain more support for Fithen's account, I interviewed several individuals who were part of what Fithen called the 'Bo Kamajors'. I also met with Eddie himself. The accounts they gave confirm the description given by Fithen. Through the interviews, it became apparent the Bo Kamajors consisted of volunteers from more than one chiefdom. They were mobilised through rumours; when the Bo Kamajors asked the initiators and camp representatives in displaced persons camps to gather some men, it would start a rumour and this worked to gather even more volunteers. Eddie became the leader of this group of Kamajors due to his role as a liaison officer with the SLA. As the combatants were collected from various sources, the group did not belong to a particular chiefdom.

This Kamajor group's major success was its attack and destruction of the RUF's headquarters at the Zogoda, which happened in October 1996.¹¹⁶ The Zogoda base was in the Gbandawo Forest in Kenema District. The attack on the base

actually took place during the peace negotiations, as fighting continued even as the Kabbah administration and RUF were holding talks to try and bring about an end to the civil war.¹¹⁷ On 30 November, a month after the fall of the Zogoda base, the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed between the RUF and Kabbah government (Pham 2005: 121).¹¹⁸ It is said that the fall of the base at Zogoda was such a huge loss for the RUF that it forced them into signing the peace accord. The Sierra Leonean newspaper *Vision* reported on the fall of Zogoda with the headline 'Kamajor Destroy RUF Base' (17 October 1996). According to the accompanying article, several hundred Kamajor left Blawa on 7 September and, after liberating several villages from RUF control, they destroyed the RUF's third battalion, which was based in Gbandawo. *Conflict Mapping* also makes the following reference to the fall of Zogoda Base:

The fighting lasted several days, as a result of which the combined forces were able to dislodge the RUF from the camp. In the camp, the Kamajors found many RUF documents consisting of records of RUF activities, including, inter alia, records of the attacks on the Bo-Kenema Highway, how many items were stolen and how many people were captured to carry the load. In the camp, the combined forces found many captured civilians, who related how they were treated during their stay in the camp. (Smith et al. 2004: 314–315)

One of the Kamajors I interviewed during my fieldwork also related his experiences at Zogoda. He said, 'A lot of weapons were found at Zogoda. We also found *Footpath to Democracy* [a pamphlet that laid out the RUF's claims]. There were also some solar panels'. What left an impression with me was his account of one of the RUF leaders, Zino, who was second only to Foday Sankoh in the organisation.¹¹⁹ One of the Kamajors who took part in the fighting said the following:

I could see Zino fleeing into the bush. He took hold of a little girl's hand and fled into the bush with her. I can clearly remember seeing him.[...] Later, the girl was by herself in the bush. We found her and took her in.¹²⁰

Zino's whereabouts after that are unknown. There is no record confirming his death.

The Kamajors who took part in this operation were mobilised from a number of different chiefdoms. According to *Conflict Mapping*, they came from Small Bo, Niawa and Langruma Chiefdoms in Kenema District and Wonde and Boama Chiefdoms in Bo District (Smith et al. 2004: 314).

I interviewed three individuals who took part in this attack, one of whom was from Boama Chiefdom, and the other two were deployed from the Kamajor group headed by an initiator, Saddam Sheriff. This indicates that Eddie's Kamajor group was made up of volunteers from many other Kamajors.

A Kamajor Group that Expanded by Bringing Multiple Chiefdoms under Its Control

The second Kamajor group I will describe in this section is what Fithen described as the 'Kenema *Kamajoisia*'. It comprised Kamajors from several chiefdoms and was led by an initiator called Brima Bangura (Fithen 1999: 211). Unlike Eddie Massallay's Kamajor group, the one led by Brima Bangura clashed repeatedly with the Sierra Leone armed forces (Fithen 1999: 243). The following is Fithen's description of the Kenema Kamajor group.

The Kenema *kamajoisia* (sic) swear allegiance to their paramount leader, Alhaji Brima Bangura. He is the custodian of *kamajo* (sic) lore and represents a spiritual and moral zenith within the organisation. At parades and musters of the group, the fighters enter into a dramaturgy of subservience to demonstrate their unfaltering loyalty to his word. This is done by a series of genuflections and exaggerated salutes in a performance of parade-ground militaristic pomp. In accordance with this ritualised drill, the *Kamor* [Brima Bangura] remains stern and aloof, presenting his hand to be kissed by commanders. The effect of this is to demonstrate a level of discipline and loyalty that is perceived to be lacking in both the RUF and the RSLMF [note by the author – The Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces]. The message is one of moral duty, self-sacrifice and tradition which is typically echoed as a theme by

the majority of civil defence militias in Sierra Leone. The intention is to show the power of historically-established cultural capital and its role in shaping an ordered and just society against a backdrop of unpredictable social turmoil.

Immediately beneath the *Kamor* in the hierarchy is the Kenema *kamajoisia* District War Council. This consists of a Chairman and several members. They exist primarily to monitor the overall security situation in the operational sector and make tactical decisions regarding movement and operations of fighters in the area. The majority of their regional intelligence is received from town chiefs and section chiefs who are expected to travel to Kenema and report on a regular basis. For C. [the section chief described above], this was a weekly obligation. Tactical decisions are subject to the final approval of the *Kamor* himself. The members of the War Council are all senior *kamajoisia* and generally elderly men of some financial means. The source of this wealth is almost always diamond mining and during lulls in operations many of the younger *kamajoisia* will work as diggers for their patrons.

[section omitted]

The War Council passes orders to the Organisational Commanders. The duty of the OCs is to plan any operation tactically, taking into account not only offensive aspects but also those of logistical support, intelligence and communications. Logistical support is comprised of transport, rice rations and ammunition supply. Transport is arranged with civilian haulage firms who have local connections with the militia. They will offer fuelled trucks to carry fighters and rice to the battle front and, in the case of the Kenema *kamajoisia*, will return wounded to the hospitals at Daru and Kenema.

Ammunition supply is arranged by quartermasters who stockpile captured RUF and RSLMF (sic) [the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces] supplies. The more experienced combatants receive the more technologically sophisticated weaponry and are used as shocktroops (sic) in combat. Some of these *kamajoisia* have received training in counter-insurgency techniques by European expatriate security operators through the agency of deputy minister of defence, Chief Sam Hinga Norman. Communications, however, remain poor, but the

general level of communication among both the army and the RUF is also very bad, leaving the *kamajoisia* at no particular disadvantage.

The organisational commanders in turn brief the senior commander and his field commanders on any specific operation. These are the leaders who will actually manage the fighters in combat. They are in the best position to make tactical refinements concerning the best methods of engaging the enemy. The commanders have a reputation for leading from the front and generally hold the respect of the rank and file. Many have been reported killed in operations – especially during the first major assault on RUF positions in northern Kailahun in January 1997. Commanders are rotated for specific situations – each one having a specialist knowledge of a particular area (often that in which he was born and initiated). In this way, the lack of maps is compensated for by the accurate local knowledge of those in command. (Fithen 1999: 211–213. Some sections have been omitted by the author)

In Fithen's description, Brima Bangura's Kenema *kamajoisia* consisted of several chiefdoms around Kenema. Section chiefs and town chiefs were involved in intelligence gathering (Fithen 1999: 243). This means that the leadership of the Kamajor groups had shifted away from the traditional authority of the chiefdoms to an initiator.

The leader of this Kamajor group, Brima Bangura, was a follower of Saddam Sheriff (a fact that was uncovered during my fieldwork). After moving his shrine from Bo Town to Kenema Town, Saddam Sheriff was killed by members of the SLA in the city of Kenema in September 1996 (Hoffman 2011a: 231). This was done by the soldiers in revenge for some of their comrades who had been killed by the Kamajors (Muana 1997: 96). The following account provides some details behind the animosity between Saddam Sheriff and the SLA.

The background to Saddam Sheriff being killed was looting by the Sierra Leonean army. They took advantage of the confusion caused by the civil war to plunder and loot. The Kamajors knew the people living in the villages. When the Kamajors heard about this looting from these acquaintances, they prohibited the army from carrying out military operations independently without accompanying Kamajors. For some

in the armed forces, the Kamajors were a thorn in their side as they were getting in the way of their looting. This is how both groups ended up carrying out their military operations independently of each other. Relations between the SLA and Kamajors deteriorated, and things became so bad that there were often gun battles between the two sides.¹²¹

Fithen conducted his research after Saddam Sheriff was killed.

In this section, I have shown that large Kamajor groups emerged from the many smaller Kamajor units. There were signs in this period that the Kamajors across the region were starting to coordinate with one another, and several large Kamajor groups were formed from this. The forces of Eddie Massalley and Brima Bangura have been described here as examples of these large Kamajor groups. Furthermore, these two cases show that while the Kamajor groups generally coexisted, there was also antagonism between them.

* * *

This chapter has verified prevalent trends in the Kamajors in the period that covers the latter half of 1995 through to May 1997 (from the NPRC administration to the first Kabbah administration). These may be summarised as follows:

1. From around the latter half of 1995, hunter militias began to be formed in camps for internally displaced persons. Hunter militias started to develop connections that extended beyond the boundaries of individual chiefdoms.
2. At the same time, the initiation rituals spread and the hunter militias transformed into something that could be called 'Kamajors'. With demand for initiations increasing, the initiators began to leave Kale Village in Bonthe District and scattered throughout the Mende land. New initiators also emerged and there were some who had their own force of fighters.
3. Kamajor forces kept up a cycle of repeated mergers and a number of very powerful groups merged. As a result of transcending individual chiefdoms to cooperate with each other, the Kamajors

started to break away from the control of the traditional authorities. The leadership of the Kamajor groups was taken up by the initiators and Kamajor commanders. Sometimes, Kamajor groups that had bolstered their power competed with each other.

When these trends are compared with my hypothesis, it can be said that they reveal the process by which smaller PC networks based around a single chiefdom merged into larger networks. The leadership of the Kamajors shifted away from the paramount chiefs and was taken over by Kamajor commanders and initiators. The smaller PC networks separated from the chiefdoms and began to coagulate into several larger PC networks.

The Rise of a Dominant PC Network (The Gendema Kamajors): The AFRC Administration – Period I (May 1997 to November 1997)

In the previous chapter, we looked at how the Kamajors conglomerated into a number of large forces.

These forces (called the Kamajors groups in this book) reached a turning point after the military coup d'état that took place on 25 May 1997. After the May 25 coup,¹²² President Kabbah fled to and sought refuge in the capital of neighbouring Guinea, Conakry, and there he established the exile government. At the same time, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military regime was being established in Freetown under the leadership of Major Johnny Paul Koroma. The AFRC then invited the RUF to join its new government, in order to bring the civil war to a close (The coalition government formed by the AFRC and the RUF were known as the 'People's Army'. In this text, they are referred to simply as the 'AFRC/RUF'). Once the new government was formed, the Kamajors took the side of the exiled Kabbah administration and began conducting hostile actions against AFRC/RUF forces.

The AFRC-led administration held control over the government from the May 25 Coup until President Kabbah returned to the country in March of 1998. During that period, the Kamajors repeatedly engaged in battle with AFRC/RUF forces in order to bring Kabbah back. It was also during this period that a single, integrated organisation began to emerge among the various Kamajors groups, and it began to take on the appearance of a national-level PC network. In this chapter and the next, we will discuss some of the processes through which this occurred.

Here in Chapter 8, we provide a closer look at the Kamajors active in the town of Gendema on the Liberian border. From the point that the AFRC ordered the dissolution of the Kamajors, their relationship with the AFRC/RUF was generally a hostile one. The Gendema Kamajors were the driving forces behind greater integration of the Kamajor groups under the shared goal of returning the Kabbah government to power. The Gendema Kamajors made efficient use of the geographical characteristics offered

them by the national border they fought on and used them to their advantage in battle. They also received support from ECOMOG (the Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group), and distributed those resources to other Kamajor groups. In this way, the Kamajor group in Gendema ended up in a position of leadership among the Kamajors for a period of time.

The next chapter (Chapter 9) will focus on how the Gendema Kamajors lost their influence, and the hinterland groups rose to take their place in positions of dominance within the Kamajor structure.

In terms of the overall thesis, Chapters 8 and 9 illuminate how a single dominant PC network emerged to stand over the previous competing PC networks. However, as we will learn in Chapter 9, that dominant PC network was replaced. The thesis of this book shows the process of transformation within the Kamajor/CDF as a process that arose through the integration of PC networks; it assumes that smaller networks integrated with each other to form a larger network. Chapters 8 and 9 shows this process was not a linear transformation. Instead, these chapters show that political struggles accompanied the integration of the Kamajor groups, as each rose and fell in the power hierarchy.

As mentioned, this chapter traces out the existence of the Gendema Kamajor organisation and will follow the structure laid out below. Section 1 explains the background of the May 25 Coup and the circumstances leading up to it. Section 2 describes how Kamajors gathered in the town of Gendema on the Liberian border, began fighting against the AFRC/RUF forces and initiated the support they received from ECOMOG. In Section 3, we look at how the Gendema Kamajors brought Samuel Hinga Norman as leader and how Norman began to be ‘a patron’ through distributing military support to Kamajors groups throughout Sierra Leone. Section 4 describes the battles the Gendema Kamajors took part in. Finally, Section 5 provides a description of the process by which my research collaborator in Sierra Leone, Sparrow, joined the Gendema Kamajors, and describes the CDF Special Forces that he led.

1. The circumstances that led to the May 25 Coup

A military coup d’état took place in Sierra Leone on 25 May 1997. The coup arose from the deterioration in the relationship between

the Kabbah administration and the Sierra Leonean military, and there were two primary factors behind that deterioration. The first factor was the restructuring of the armed forces that arose after the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord and the second was the continually increasing numbers of the Kamajors.

Military Restructuring Based in the Abidjan Peace Accord

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed by the Kabbah administration and the RUF rebels in November 1996, after the fall of Zogoda. Article 10 of the Accord outlined a requirement for the Government of Sierra Leone to ‘make recommendations on the restructuring and re-orientation of the military as well as its leadership’. The Kabbah administration used that provision to implement a number of structural reforms within the military, which had expanded in size during the civil war, and reduced the number of vested interests. The official size of the Army that was presented to the president was approximately 17,000,¹²³ and the government attempted to reduce those numbers to less than 7,000 (TRC 3A 2004: 235). The government also reduced the monthly rice allowance provided to the military, from a total 25,000 bags of rice a month to 8,000 bags. The previous amount had 17,000 soldiers receiving 25,000 bags a month, and that was reduced to 8,000 bags for 7,000 soldiers. In other words, the number of bags per person dropped from 1.47 to 1.14.

In fact, illegal resale of supplies by officers was rampant, so rations per soldier were even lower. A regular soldier’s monthly salary was as little as 25 dollars, which meant that the monthly rice ration was an indispensable part of sustaining the lives of the soldiers. Regardless, the monthly rice ration was reduced and as a result, dissatisfaction with the Kabbah government increased among soldiers in the SLA (Pham 2005: 121; TRC 3A 2004: 235).

Clashes between the Kamajors and the SLA

In addition to the issues arising from reduced personnel numbers and rations the Kabbah government utilised Kamajor militia more often than it utilised the military. Deputy Defence Minister, Samuel Hinga Norman, did not trust the SLA (Incidentally, the post of

Defence Minister was then held by Kabbah concurrently with his position as president). Norman had the experience of leading the Kamajors and would have often heard about looting on the part of the military. Therefore, it was not unreasonable for him to distrust a military that was that undisciplined. However, even after Norman took his position as Deputy Defence Minister, he continued to distrust the military, publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the SLA and used Kamajors forces instead of the military. In April 1997, the parliament of Sierra Leone passed a law authorising the use of weapons by vigilante organisations (Hoffman 2011a: 42–43). For the SLA, the passing of this law meant that their own role was being usurped by the Kamajors.

These issues lay at the heart of the deteriorating relationship between the administration of President Kabbah and the military forces of Sierra Leone, but at the same time, the relationship between the Kamajors and the military in rural areas was also deteriorating. As ‘the Kamajors’ power increased, they began to clash more often with SLA soldiers. Keen’s work includes some commentary from a soldier regarding these developments.

We had reason to believe that the threat of elimination of the military as an institution was real ... Our complaints were totally disregarded by the government, and officers accused of retaliating against Kamajoh aggression were subjected to acts of discipline. ... The May 25th Coup was a reaction to these problems. (Keen 2005: 200)

Fithen discussed two examples of clashes between Kamajors and military forces. The first was in relation to a diamond mining site. The following testimony narrates one clash between the SLA and the Kamajors:

On the night of 22nd March 1997, violence erupted with an outbreak of intense fighting between 850 RSLMF [Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force] stragglers illegally encamped in Tongo Field and the Kenema *kamajoisia*. The violence was characteristically ‘diamond related’ and heavy casualties were taken by both sides. [...] The whole thing started on Saturday evening. They had a dance at the

‘Independent’ (a bar in the central market area) where the Kamajors (sic) were running the security. At the end of the dance two soldiers who were there were beaten to death after being accused of theft. In the morning, the matter was reported to the authorities and some of the respective chiefs and elders came to make sure that the situation was calm. That was at about 12 o’clock. I was with this party as a representative from the health centre – we had dealt with the dead soldiers. First, we met with the Kamajors at their HQ and then proceeded to the (RSLMF) HQ as there was to be a meeting between both leaderships. Suddenly, about 1.25 pm the brief meeting was broken up by rapid firing which was very serious [...] in the centre of the town. It was a battle between the Kamajors and the soldiers [...] The soldiers remained in control of Tongo Field until the night of the 29th March 1997, when they left under the cover of darkness, heading north along an old feeder road towards Kono. [...] the stream of miners and their dependents out of the Tongo area constant for several days; the centre of Kenema becoming packed full of people with nowhere to go, hundreds of them being forced to sleep rough on the streets until the fighting abated. (Fithen 1999: 217–220. Some portions omitted and rearranged for understanding)

The second incident took place at a military checkpoint sometime in April or May 1997.

The soldiers controlling one of the village check-points between Masiaka and Mile 91 caught three Kamajors on a track and proceeded to beat them. One Kamajor escaped into the bush and returned with a Kamajor unit. Some soldiers were killed. It was after this incident that the soldiers withdrew to the compound outside Mile 91. (Fithen 1999: 221)

I too discovered information about a clash between the SLA and the Kamajors. The narrative below was provided by a Temne individual in the Mokanji area of Moyamba District (Moyamba District is populated by a mix of both Temne and Mende peoples).

Mokanji was attacked by rebels at one point, but it was later recaptured by the army. From then on, the military was stationed in Mokanji. Army soldiers roamed around the town. Some of them found girlfriends in town. People in Mokanji grew rice and vegetables, they could catch fish, and there was meat. It wasn't a situation where they were likely to starve. The problem was the supply of Maggi¹²⁴ and the supply of salt. It was necessary to transport these from the city, but the roads were dangerous, so we couldn't get them. Soldiers would give salt and Maggi that they had brought with them to their girlfriends as presents. Their girlfriends would then sell it on. Those supplies circulated throughout Mokanji, and they were very expensive.

Most of the soldiers stationed in town were withdrawn after the signing of the Peace Accord [This is likely a reference to the 1996 Abidjan Peace Accord]. However, the town's people wanted the soldiers to remain in town to keep them safe. The military then demanded that each community provide one young man to them, and a total of 40 young men were gathered. They were all Mende. The military sent those young men to Bonthe District to be initiated into the Kamajors. After their return, a public ceremony was held in which the young men were handed over by the military to the inhabitants of the communities. The SLA left 49 soldiers in the area and withdrew the rest.

The Mende later began to say that anyone wearing a military uniform was a rebel. That was when there was a clash between the Kamajors and the SLA. Many Kamajors from other towns and villages came to where the SLA soldiers were stationed and surrounded the garrisons. First, two soldiers were killed, Tibati and Dennis. Then lots of the Kamajors were killed. It was because the SLA had modern weapons. The Kamajors withdrew, and Mokanji was left under the control of the SLA. After that, I didn't experience any more fighting until the end of the civil war.¹²⁵

These narratives show how the power of the Kamajors expanded in the early Kabbah administration and they began to clash with soldiers of the SLA. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted that 'the 25 May 1997 coup was predictable' for 'most of observers within the military' and 'a coup was a matter of time' (TRC

3A 2004: 233). In fact, the Kabbah government faced two other attempted coups before the one that took place on 25 May (Pham 2005: 120).

The Coup d'état and the Exile of President Kabbah

The May 25 Coup d'état was a result of dissatisfaction among members of the Sierra Leone military. The coup began early in the morning on 25 May 1997 at the Cockerill military headquarters in Freetown. The soldiers taking part in the coup d'état initiated action and gradually drew in more soldiers as they learned about the coup. Some of the soldiers who had initiated the coup at the Cockerill headquarters then occupied a radio station and declared the collapse of the Kabbah government on air. Other soldiers made their way to Pademba Road Prison. Their objective was to ensure the release of Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had been imprisoned for his role in planning out a previous attempted coup. A local newspaper described the coup in the following way.

Two Mercedes Benz cars carrying armed men arrived at Pademba Road prisons at 4.30 am on Sunday May 25. The guards spotted the cars when they arrived at the main gate. They sensed danger and so they sneakingly abandoned their post. They only returned only to surface back at about 5.30 am with an additional truck loaded with highly armed men. The night guards and officers who had reported for duty that morning were all placed under gun point and ordered to give instructions for the opening of the prison gate.¹²⁶

By 7 am, the number of soldiers participating in the coup had swelled into the thousands, and they had begun to gather in front of Pademba Road Prison (TRC 3A 2004: 242–247). The soldiers opened the prison's gates and released all the prisoners within. One of those prisoners was Major Koroma.

Shortly after the prison break, a radio statement on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) announced the formation of the AFRC with the just released Major Koroma to take the post of chairman (Pham 2005: 122–123). That same day, they broadcasted their intention to form a joint government between the AFRC and

RUF by inviting the RUF. In response, the RUF press secretary issued a press release on 30 May, detailing the formation of an integrated 'People's Army' made up of combatants from the RUF and soldiers of the SLA.

On 1 June, the membership of the AFRC was announced. Major Koroma was made chairman and the RUF leader Foday Sankoh was named Deputy Chairman. This was the birth of the combined military/rebel government, but Sankoh's participation was only nominal, as he had been arrested in Nigeria some months before, on 2 March 1997. He had been arrested for illegal possession of weaponry (Pham 2005: 120). Sankoh remained detained in Nigeria and never showed up in Freetown during the period the AFRC/RUF was in power.

The May 25 Coup was distinct from other coups Sierra Leone had faced before. It differed from previous coups in that Freetown was rocked by a storm of looting and violence. Soldiers rode around the city in stolen vehicles, brandished their weapons and swaggered around the streets of Freetown. On top of this, the RUF were then allowed to enter the city. The inhabitants of Freetown fled or hid, not knowing what was in store for them. Government officials also fled, leaving the administrative organisations of the city paralysed. It is said that 200,000 people escaped to Guinea as refugees during the months the AFRC/RUF controlled the city (Pham 2005: 124–125).

President Kabbah also escaped to Guinea, where he established his Government in Exile. The same day of the coup, President Kabbah moved to Lungi International Airport in order to ensure his safety. From there he fled to Guinea, where he eventually set up his Government in Exile. Many ministers and members of parliament also crossed the border into Guinea. President Kabbah made his base in Conakry, Guinea's capital city, and began marshalling support from the international community through diplomatic efforts (TRC 3A 2004: 248).

In response, the international community stood by the Kabbah administration, with the countries of West Europe and the Commonwealth, and Sierra Leone's neighbouring countries in West Africa all strongly denouncing the coup. Soon after the coup, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued a presidential

statement calling for an immediate restoration of constitutional order.¹²⁷ Later in October that same year, the Security Council issued a resolution called for economic sanctions to be put in place (UNSC Resolution 1132).¹²⁸ In addition, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) issued a condemnation of the military government in June and declared its support of the efforts Sierra Leone's neighbours were making to resolve the conflict (Gbla and Ochiai 2011: 9).

As members of the international community, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played an integral role in bringing around a resolution to the situation. ECOWAS is a regional economic organisation of West African states that was formed in 1975. Since getting involved in the First Liberian Civil War in 1989, it has contributed to maintaining security in the region.

ECOWAS implemented a number of measures aimed at bringing President Kabbah administration back into power. The first were economic sanctions aimed at the military government.¹²⁹ The second measure was to seek out a method of transferring power through negotiations with the AFRC.¹³⁰ The third measure involved the taking of military action against AFRC/RUF forces (Ochiai 2002: 44). ECOWAS military operations were primarily carried out by Nigerian forces and they were deeply involved with the Kamajors.

The Kamajors Immediately after the May 25 Coup

Let us now turn our attention to events taking place in Sierra Leone. With the establishment of the AFRC administration, fighting between the Kamajors and military forces under the AFRC/RUF intensified. The AFRC had ordered the dissolution of the Kamajors on the day of the coup. Major Koroma issued the following statement on air through the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (99.9 MHz).

We are all one; the war is over. As I am talking now, as the spokesman now, all Kamajors are to be disbanded forthwith. No more Kamajors, no more civil defence forces as from now. We are the National Army. We have to fight for this country through the support of you, the nation. (Abdullah 1998: 231)

The declaration ordering the dissolution of the Kamajors was made on-air (Ochiai 2011c), but the Kamajors ignored the order. With the establishment of the military government, most soldiers belonging to the SLA simply became soldiers in the new government's army (Some refused to join the military regime and instead followed the Kabbah administration. They gathered at Lungi International Airport, which was in the hands of ECOMOG forces). After the May 25 Coup, the Kamajors continued to engage in battles with the military government. Keen provided a statement made by a Sierra Leonean employee of Médecins Sans Frontières¹³¹ (MSF, or Doctors without Borders).

I worked in Moyamba for MSF in 1997. Kamajors were occupying there [Moyamba]. They were rooted out [after the coup succeeded]. The civil militias were killed and buried in shallow graves along the street. (Keen 2005: 211)

These sorts of clashes occurred around the country. The Kamajors used the term 'junta' to describe the AFRC government and the RUF and remained hostile to them. Kamajors living in urban areas moved out to rural villages or the bush. The urban areas were under the control of the junta, but their sphere of control did not extend further than those specific areas. Only a few steps out of the cities would bring a person into Kamajors-controlled lands. For example, the town of Bonthe had already been under the control of the SLA at the time of the coup and it remained under the control of the junta afterwards. Under junta rule, there were individuals who were executed as being suspected Kamajors, but the areas around town were controlled by the Kamajors. The Kamajors in Bonthe left town, then took position around town in order to raid it (Smith et al. 2004: 442). Junta forces had to travel between towns under their control in convoys because they were unable to hold rural areas. This was done in order to avoid being attacked while on the road. Goods were also transported by convoy from Freetown to other cities and towns. Junta forces were able to retain control of the areas the SLA had already controlled before the coup, but no more. Their control did not extend past the edges of those cities and towns.

Samuel Hinga Norman and the Kamajors

Deputy Defence Minister Norman came to be known for having led the Kamajor forces up until the May 25 Coup in the post of National Coordinator. More precisely, he was considered to have been their nominal leader. After the coup, different Kamajors from around the country began to get in contact with Norman. See the two statements below for more clarity regarding the circumstances. Both were made by Kamajor individuals who appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Upon hearing of the overthrow of the Government, all the Kamajors left the town; they went into the suburbs. So we were asking ourselves how we could contact these people, so that we would be able to join up with them [...] But Hinga Norman who had been the head of these vigilantes [and] who had been training us was not there. All our Districts were becoming vulnerable because we had no coordination of Kamajors. Particularly in the big towns like Bo, we who were left here were vulnerable, because a good number of the Kamajors had gone to the outskirts of their chiefdoms [...] We came together and we started sending people into the areas where the Kamajors were based, in order to organise them – I was the liaison officer for that particular operation. But we were looking out for Hinga Norman to co-ordinate with him properly so that we would be able to get rid of these people and bring back our elected Government.” (TRC 3A 2004: 267–268)

The next statement shows how Kamajor groups dispatched messengers to the Government in Exile in Guinea.

I was one of the delegates that led the delegation to Guinea; two of us went there [...] We went to Conakry in search of Chief Norman but we could not find him there; still we were able to stay there for quite a good time – about a month. [...] We spoke with ministers and members of parliament who were based there in Conakry; indeed we achieved our aim, which was to prepare some documents, work out what we needed to do in order to get these people [the AFRC junta]

out of power. Eventually we returned here [to Sierra Leone] without getting Chief Norman. (TRC 3A 2004: 268)

We see that several Kamajor groups considered Norman their leader, and looked to him to offer them direction. During my research, I also found that many Kamajor groups attempted to make contact with Norman.

Changes in the Structure of the Civil War

The May 25 Coup caused an upheaval in the structure of the civil war. First, the RUF joined the AFRC to form the junta and, second, the Kamajors ended up standing against the junta. Before the coup on 25 May, the Kamajors had been made up of numerous groups that aimed to protect their own communities. Some groups worked together with the SLA to fight off RUF rebels, while some fought against them as they had no faith in the military. However, after the coup, all the Kamajors considered the junta to be the enemy. This is how the structure of the civil war changed such that the AFRC and the RUF, which were in control of the central government, standing against the Kamajors and Kabbah's Government in Exile.

As a result, the Kamajors began a propaganda campaign demanding a return to democratically elected government. Many Kamajors after the coup explained that they fought against the military government under the banner of democracy. Up until that point the Kamajors had acted independently, but this propaganda campaign gave them a shared objective. What arose out of that campaign was the name of 'Civil Defence Forces (CDF)'. The Kamajors turned to other hunter militia members in their desire to bring back democratic rule. However, the term 'Kamajor' itself – a word used among the Mende people – offered little in the way of persuasiveness. A new term was needed, and the concept had to embody 'opposition to the junta' for all peoples of Sierra Leone. It was from that need that the concept of the CDF arose.

2. The Kamajors Gather on the Liberian Border

How did the Kamajors come to share the goal of a return to democracy, and how did the term CDF come to be used? To answer these questions, we must turn our attention to a specific group of Kamajors – those who were active in the town of Gendema on the border with Liberia. Below, we look at the activities of the Gendema Kamajors.

The Kamajors Gather on the Liberian Border

The Gendema Kamajors was a Kamajor group which appeared in the previous chapter. That is the Kamajors group organised to work in collaboration with the SLA, and led by liaison officer Eddie Massallay. At the time of the May 25 Coup, the group was engaged in joint operations with army units based at the military station in Zimmi in Pujehun District, which lies on the Liberian border. The coup triggered the group's flight towards the border into Liberia. Massallay described the events in my interview.

When the AFRC coup happened, I was at the SLA base in Zimmi. I was living with the army soldiers. I learned about the coup d'état on the radio. I didn't believe it at first. The radio report said that President Kabbah was exiled, and that the AFRC had welcomed the RUF into their ranks. I became gradually more convinced that the situation was getting worse. That was when we left for Gendema.¹³²

Testimony in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also described how the Kamajors came to gather at Gendema.

I can tell you it was 6 June in 1997 when we opened Gendema Base [...] Gendema Base was the first base of the Kamajors and the CDF for the 'junta war'. It was created for Kamajors, so that whosoever would find his way to Gendema, [it] meant that he was saved [...] We did not say 'we are coming to build this base in order to fight for Sierra Leone or to fight for revolution in Sierra Leone.' We only found the place there because it was the last station on the way to Liberia. (TRC 3A 2004: 269)

These narratives explain how Massallay's Kamajor group broke with the national army and escaped to Gendema. In his position as leader of the Gendema Kamajors, Massallay announced their opposition to the AFRC through the mass media (newspapers and radio). Massallay stated that they used the media in order to ensure the fight moved forward in their favour. From July to November, Massallay's press statements were covered frequently in the media. Massallay had already released a statement on May 28, three days after the coup.

"We are awaiting word from President Kabbah and we will be in Freetown to help restore order and democracy", said Kamajor commander Eddie Massallay. "We went to the polls and democratically elected President Kabbah and until his term is over, no one can remove him. Nigeria or ECOMOG is welcome in any part of Sierra Leone, provided their coming is to restore democracy. Bring back the president or we do it ourselves", Massallay said.¹³³

Massallay's press releases played a role in raising the presence of the Gendema Kamajors among the public.

Massallay's announcement of the Kamajors opposition to the Junta was followed by a call for Kamajors around the country to gather in Gendema. The word went out over the radio and through word of mouth, and Kamajors from different areas began to arrive in town. The statement below was obtained from a Kamajor who had made his way to Gendema in response to Massallay's call.

I was fighting in the bush alongside the SLA when the coup happened. We were advancing through Kailahun District (a RUF stronghold) at that time. As we were moving between Pendembu and Gehun, I was ordered to withdraw from the army. They told me to go back to the base at Daru. At Daru, the army was ordering Kamajors to return their weapons and disperse. We refused and ran away. We fled to Pujehun District (where the Speaker was born). I was trying to get back to my own village, but on the way, I met more Kamajors. From them, I learned that the Kamajors were being reorganised in Gendema. That's when I decided to go to Gendema myself.¹³⁴

The Kamajor that told this story participated in the attack that toppled the RUF's Camp Zogoda and had a number of acquaintances who fought in Massallay's Kamajor group.

The next individual was living as normal in a village when he answered the call to gather in Gendema.

After becoming a Kamajor and chasing off the rebels, I returned to my village to live. I was just a farmer (because the chiefdom had been made safe again) [...] When the coup happened, I heard that my comrades were gathering together in Gendema, so I decided I had to go to Gendema too.¹³⁵

This individual had been a Kamajor but had returned to regular life after helping regain the chiefdom. He later went on to Gendema. Many Kamajors began to gather in Gendema. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report states that, 'Pre-existing civil militia groups from Bo, Moyamba, Kenema and Kailahun Districts began to divide themselves into "defensive" and "offensive" units: the former would stay in their villages to protect them against possible raids by AFRC or RUF forces, while the latter headed for Bonthe or Pujehun to seek common coordination with other Kamajors and a potential link-up with Chief Hinga Norman' (TRC 3A 2004: 270). In addition, those who had not yet completed their initiation ceremonies also made their way to Gendema. After arriving in the town, they underwent initiation and were made Kamajors. The statement below was made by an individual who arrived in Gendema in June 1998.

I worked in a shop in Freetown, but I quit and returned to my village to mine diamonds. My village is a few miles from Gendema. Around the time of the coup, I was in my village. One of my relatives was a Kamajor commander. So I went to Gendema. When I arrived in Gendema, my relative took me to see Eddie Massallay, the chief commander. That's when I was judged. I had to show them that I wasn't one of the enemy. Later, I took part in a three-day long initiation ceremony. The ceremony included activities that were military in nature, and more traditional activities, too.¹³⁶

The initiation ceremonies for new Kamajors were conducted by the initiators that had escaped to Gendema. Like the Kamajors, the initiators had felt threatened by the military regime and had fled. Many initiators gathered in Gendema, and a man named Moalem Shuahibu Sheriff, who had a shrine in Pujehun, took the role of leader of the initiators. Moalem Shuahibu Sheriff was a student of Saddam Sheriff, and like his teacher, he ended up fighting as a commander on the front lines.¹³⁷ Moalem Sheriff accompanied his teacher when Saddam travelled from the village of Kale to Bo. Saddam later moved his temple from Bo to Kenema, and it was then that Moalem Sheriff founded his own independent shrine in Pujehun District. He came to take command over a number of initiators, which we discuss in the following pages.

The Gendema Kamajor Leadership

Here we discuss the leadership of the Gendema Kamajors. The top of the Gendema Kamajor was Eddie Massallay. Below him there were several individuals who were also considered part of the leadership. The hierarchy of the Gendema Kamajors is unclear, and even the titles of the positions were unfixed. Massallay was older, but the rest of them were in their 20s. The leadership was primarily made up of individuals born in the early to mid-1970s.

Ibrahim Tucker has been described as Massallay's second in command (cf. Hoffman 2011a: 120). During my interview with him, Tucker told me that he was born into the ruling family of the Nongoba Bullum Chiefdom in Bonthe District, and he joined the Kamajors in Kale Village. Tucker travelled to Bo, following Saddam Sheriff. He had not yet been initiated by the time he arrived in Bo, so when he got there, he was initiated by Lahai Bangura. Eddie Massallay was also initiated by Lahai Bangura. That connection is what brought Tucker into the Kamajors led by Massallay, and had him engaging in joint operations with the SLA. At the time of the coup, Tucker had already risen to a high position in Massallay's Kamajors. Like Massallay, Tucker fled from the army base in Zimmi to Gendema.¹³⁸

The previously mentioned initiator Shuahibu Sheriff was also counted among the leadership. He ran a shrine in Pujehun District

until the May 25 Coup, at which point he also went to Gendema. He served both as an initiator and as a commander. Shuahibu Sheriff continued to live in Gendema after the civil war, and I was able to speak with him in 2009. He spoke about his own teacher, Saddam Sheriff, for a number of minutes, before telling me that he was now an elementary school teacher and he had to get to work (I had visited Sheriff in the morning). He promised to speak to me during a later visit, but in the end, I was unable to meet him again during that research trip. In the following year, I travelled to Gendema again, but discovered that he had already passed away. Apparently, he had complained of abdominal pain and had been taken to a hospital across the border in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, but they were unable to save him. His explanations were clear, and he was a very eloquent speaker. He left a powerful impression on me.

John Swaray was another of the leaders of the Gendema Kamajors, but I was unable to get in contact with him. During my research, I interviewed Massallay, Tucker and Shuahibu Sheriff. Everyone said that, with the inclusion of John Swaray, these four men were in charge of decision making among the Gendema Kamajors. Tucker said, 'We discussed everything. If there were problems, we pointed them out to each other. We carried out every decision after discussing it'.

Support from ECOMOG and the Invitation to Samuel Hinga Norman

The Gendema Kamajor leadership gathered on the border implemented various measures to ensure fighting would move forward in an advantageous way. One such measure was to contact ECOMOG and obtain military support.

ECOMOG is a joint military force first established by ECOWAS to conduct peacekeeping efforts during the First Liberian Civil War. At the time of the May 25 coup, there were a few hundred Nigerian soldiers stationed in Sierra Leone as a part of ECOMOG. After these Nigerian forces performed their original ECOMOG mission of aiding in the evacuation of foreigners, they then bombed Freetown at the request of President Kabbah. It was done in the name of ECOMOG, but not authorised as an official mission. This occurred on 2 June. Later, forces from Ghana and Guinea intervened militarily

with the junta in Sierra Leone under the ECOMOG name and from that point on, Nigerian soldiers engaged with the AFRC as units of ECOMOG (Ochiai 2002).¹³⁹

ECOMOG began peacekeeping operations just after the end of the civil war in Liberia, and the Liberian side of the border with Sierra Leone was being administered by ECOMOG. It would have been suicidal for AFRC/RUF forces to invade Liberia when it was being protected by ECOMOG, so they never chased their enemies across the border. In contrast, the Kamajors were able to freely go back and forth across the border as refugees. The Gendema Kamajor leadership learned that ECOMOG was attacking AFRC forces in Freetown, so they attempted to make contact with ECOMOG. They visited the ECOMOG headquarters in Monrovia in order to gain their support. Massallay described it as follows: (See Photographs 8-1 and 8-2.)

ECOMOG support was offered after the Kamajors approached them. We brought a letter to ECOMOG HQ addressed to their chief of staff. I went to Monrovia by car with Ibrahim Tucker and John Swaray. We met with the chief of staff, General Abdul One Mohamed.¹⁴⁰ We asked for military support, but he replied, 'we cannot promise any support before your president's permission'. So, we returned to Gendema ... One day an ECOMOG car came to Gendema. They said Victor Malu (the ECOMOG Force Commander)¹⁴¹ wanted to meet with a representative of the Kamajors. Me, Tucker, Swaray, and Shuahibu Sheriff got in that car and went to the ECOMOG headquarter in Monrovia. There, ECOMOG promised us to provide us with military support.¹⁴²

This was how the Gendema Kamajors were able to obtain military support from ECOMOG. The ECOMOG Force Commander Victor Malu, who Massallay and the others met with, had been involved in the ECOMOG military operations against the AFRC forces. In fact, Major-General Malu temporarily returned to Nigeria in early June, and briefed then President Sani Abacha on their armed operations. The Kamajors themselves believed that they had

received their support because Sani Abacha had ordered ECOMOG to support them.

Photograph 8-1: Gendema (The road leading to Liberia, 2000)



(Photograph by author)

Photograph 8-2: Sparrow (left), author's research collaborator, and Eddie Massallay (right)



(Taken in 2010 by author, published with permission of individuals in photograph)

At this time, ECOMOG agreed to accept Norman as the leader of the Kamajors. Massallay described it as follows.

We insisted that Norman should be accepted as our leader. ECOMOG didn't want to get involved with politicians, but we argued strongly that having a leader was necessary. That was how Norman was accepted. Norman arrived on a charter flight that day.¹⁴³

At the time of this interview, my research collaborator, Sparrow, was standing next to him listening in. As Massallay was speaking, Sparrow interrupted by saying, 'Calling for Norman was our biggest mistake'.

3. ECOMOG and the Monrovia Underground

Let us now turn our attention from Gendema to the Liberian capital of Monrovia. After the Coup of May 25, an underground organisation was founded in Monrovia with the aim of returning democracy to Sierra Leone. The organisation was called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). The organisers of the movement were Sierra Leoneans living in Liberia and refugees from Sierra Leone who had fled the Coup. Norman joined them there after travelling to Liberia. The organisation also provided support to the Gendema Kamajors and other Kamajors groups.

Two important points about this underground organisation are as follows. First, it produced several individuals devoted to Norman and, second, it provided an opportunity for former Liberian fighters to join the Kamajors.

The Monrovia Underground – the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) also appears in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission used the term to refer to the movements opposing the AFRC both in Sierra Leone and abroad after the Coup of May 25. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, those participating in the MRD are said to have kept in contact with Kamajors in different areas of the

country through traders and messengers, and provided food and other support. The TRC report goes on to describe that MRD participants were generally of one mind that they were waiting for news on the whereabouts of Norman (TRC 3A 2004: 267).

I was unable to confirm in my research whether or not the Monrovia underground was a forerunner to the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy mentioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or whether it was a simply a part of it. However, Norman's inclusion in the activities in Liberia can be considered an important point. Kabbah's Government in Exile in Guinea continued to enlist the support of the international community, and aimed to have the government reinstated through diplomacy. In contrast, Norman's aim was to return Sierra Leone to democratic rule through the use of military force (TRC 3A 2004: 251). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, after the Coup, Norman went to the Guinean capital of Conakry and visited people in the business community in order to garner support for the Kamajors. He was in Monrovia by July at the latest (TRC 3A 2004: 249).

Norman remained in contact with people in Sierra Leone after he travelled to Liberia. One of the key people in Liberia at the time was the father of my research collaborator, Sparrow. Sparrow's father and Norman had been acquaintances for many years. Sparrow's father told me that when Norman arrived in Liberia, he was essentially alone. As we discussed in Chapter 6, Norman was an enthusiastic supporter of the SLPP, and had previously lived in Liberia after suffering from political prosecution. In the same way, Sparrow's father was a supporter of the SLPP and had escaped political prosecution in Liberia. He was later successful in business in Liberia, working as a hired manager at an automobile dealer in Monrovia and developing a restaurant chain. His restaurant business failed during the First Liberian Civil War, but the automobile dealership survived. He had a location in Monrovia that doubled as both a home and office, and that served as the base of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. The members of the MRD called their base the 'Peugeot Garage'. Sparrow's father described the situation.

Norman had a connection to Eddie Massallay, but the Gendema Kamajors weren't actually in control of all the Kamajors groups. They were only a part of the Kamajors. We had to support all those people who were opposing the AFRC. That was why we gathered our comrades in Liberia and decided to support all the Kamajors. I offered my office as a base for the movement.¹⁴⁴

Norman had come to Liberia at the call of the Gendema Kamajors, and he also took part in the movement.

This underground organisation was small-scale at only around 10 members. Participants included Sparrow's father and Sparrow himself. After refusing to participate in the LUDF, Sparrow returned to Moravia and lived the life of a regular citizen (see Chapter 5 Section 2). Students from Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone had also fled as refugees to Liberia, and a few of them joined the MRD as well. In addition, two other people who later became close confidants of Norman also took part.

The first was Francis Mustapha Lumeh, who later provided and handled logistical management of procured goods for the CDF. Lumeh was from a village close to the Liberian border, and was also a Mende. At around that time, he was administering an NGO in Monrovia called the Liberian Islamic Coalition for Rural Development. The second figure was Andrew Hardin, who went on to handle personnel management with the CDF. Hardin was an employee at the automobile dealership managed by Sparrow's father.

Members of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy claimed that they conceived of the name of 'the Civil Defence Force'. The term 'Civil Defence Forces' first appeared in the media in mid-August when the MRD in Guinea announced the formation of the CDF. Below is an excerpt from the press release as published by the SaLone News Agency.

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in Sierra Leone (MRD) will form a military wing comprising all the civil defence units in the country, the SaLone News Agency reported Friday. At a meeting of the MRD executive committee Friday in Conakry, the group said it would unite all the civil defence militias and hunting societies under

‘one united command’, to be known as the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The MRD, while continuing to support diplomatic and other pressure on the AFRC, will now pursue a military option designed to restore the government of ousted President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The CDF will turn to ECOMOG and other external bodies for military assistance, the report said, while maintaining the ‘national character’ of the movement.¹⁴⁵

According to this article, it seems that the MRD was active in Guinea and they formed the CDF. On the other hand, the members of the Monrovia underground organisation asserted that they came up with the term CDF before this press release was published. Sparrow explained as follows.

We thought up the name for the forces that would fight for democracy. We needed a name that would appeal not only to Kamajors, but to all the citizens of Sierra Leone. That was how we came up with the name Civil Defence Forces. Apparently Norman really liked the name.

I think that this claim is believable.¹⁴⁶ At the time, Norman had the support of ECOMOG in travelling by air back and forth between Liberia and Guinea. Also, both the Monrovia underground and the Gendema Kamajors described how Norman often spent time in Moravia and visited Gendema, though not always. He also visited Guinea often to report to President Kabbah. These connections make it not unreasonable to assume that the underground organisation in Monrovia was in contact with the MRD in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

In fact, the Monrovia underground remained in contact with others both inside and outside of Sierra Leone through other individuals dispatched by Kabbah’s Government in Exile in the same way as Norman was. One such individual was M.S. Dumbuya, who was sent to Liberia on the order of President Kabbah in Guinea. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, President Kabbah appointed Dumbuya, a member of the Limba people, to his position in order to allay fears regarding tribalism in what was seen

as an exclusively Mende CDF (TRC 3A 2004: 254). Dumbuya was the head of the Special Security Division (SSD) in the early 1980s and, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the SSD was an armed division of the Sierra Leone Police. Dumbuya received advanced infantry training in Cuba, but in 1985, during his time as head, the SSD was involved in a failed coup d'état in Liberia. Sierra Leoneans were also arrested, and Dumbuya resigned after taking responsibility for the SSD's involvement.

President Kabbah called Dumbuya to Guinea in August, then dispatched him to Liberia (TRC 3A 2004: 254–256), along with two members of Parliament, Tejan Sankoh and M.S. Kallon.

The Monrovia underground was involved in the following activities. First, they published a weekly newsletter between June and September 1997 that provided details on the happenings of the civil war. Sparrow and the students of the University of Sierra Leone did this work. When I asked Sparrow what they wrote about, he responded, 'It was all lies and propaganda. We wrote about human rights violations by the junta, about repeated rapes they committed'. They printed as much as they could with the funds they had, then sent copies by plane to Sierra Leone where they were distributed in Freetown and Lungi. The international airport is located in Lungi, and after the May 25 Coup, SLA soldiers against the junta and loyal to the Kabbah government fled there. Because the airport was held by ECOMOG, the junta was unable to interfere.

The second activity the Monrovia underground engaged in was providing support to the Kamajors and the CDF. Those forces were being supported by ECOMOG, but apparently food and fuel supplies were insufficient. MRD members contacted Sierra Leonean people living in the USA to request financial assistance. That money was primarily used to provide the Kamajors and the CDF with daily necessities. They also supplied the Kamajors and CDF combatants with alcohol and cigarettes to prevent them from looting.

Sparrow's father worked in automobile sales and he provided two off-road capable four-wheel drive SUVs (Since I'm Japanese, during the interviews, they emphasised that one of those vehicles was a Japanese-made Mitsubishi Pajero). Norman drove one, while

Sparrow drove the other. Sparrow said that he used that car to carry supplies to Gendema and to visit around the various posts.

One time, the group received a donation of 25,000 US dollars from the Tegloma Federation International, an organisation of Sierra Leonean citizens living abroad. Such a large influx of financial assistance allowed them to purchase three radio transceivers. One each was placed in Norman's and Sparrow's cars and one was offered to the Kamajor group in Gendema.

Apparently, Norman and Sparrow's father disagreed about how to use the rest of the money they had received. Decision making in the Monrovia underground was achieved through a council-like system. Sparrow's father was managing a company, so he was in charge of handling the bank deposit book and how funds should be used was decided through discussion. However, Norman decided on how to use the money on his own initiative. It seems that, as the leader of the CDF, he thought he had the authority to make such decisions. Norman took the bank book from Sparrow's father and then gave the responsibility for budget management to Mustafa Lumeh, who had experience operating an NGO. Lumeh was also later made responsible for logistical management of supplies provided by ECOMOG to the Kamajors and CDF. Sparrow himself stated that, 'Norman was looking for "yes-men"'

Samuel Hinga Norman and ECOMOG

After the Gendema Kamajors sent for Norman, he got hold of the material support that Massallay and the other Kamajors had obtained from ECOMOG. He then began to distribute those relief supplies to other Kamajors groups around Sierra Leone and thereby consolidated his position as leader of the Kamajors and the CDF.

Norman's residence in Liberia was the Hotel Africa, located in the suburbs of Monrovia (See Photographs 8-3 and 8-4). The expenses for that residence were covered by ECOMOG. The main building of the hotel was destroyed during the First Liberian Civil War, but there were a number of villas left standing along the seashore. They were known as the OAU Villas because they were built in 1979 to house dignitaries from each country visiting for a conference of the Organisation of Africa Unity. After the OAU

Photograph 8-3: The ruins of Hotel Africa



Note: The OAU Villas are located near this position, but photography of the villas was not permitted as they were being used as military facilities. (Photograph by author, 2009)

Photograph 8-4: Ricks Institute.



The school was reopened after the Second Liberian Civil War. (Photograph by author, 2009)

conference, they were used as hotel accommodation. After the First Liberian Civil War, countries began to use the villas to house their embassies.¹⁴⁷ Norman lived in the villas, and the Sierra Leone embassy was also located there. The ambassador of the AFRC government lived right in front of Norman's villa.¹⁴⁸

Norman was regarded as leader of both the Kamajors and the CDF, and met with messengers sent from the various Kamajor groups. The Special Court for Sierra Leone heard testimony from Kamajors who were sent in search of Norman in Liberia, and met up with him at the OAU villas.

[After the May 25 Coup], we held demonstrations, we did a lot of things to express our dissatisfaction with the coup. But then some of us sat down who were activists and party members sat down and actually did a lot of brainstorming on what was happening in the country. And we arrived at the conclusion that the only way of getting rid of the AFRC junta was by force of arms [...] We decided to establish contact with the group of Kamajors who had already started resisting the AFRC at Gendema [...] I was assigned the task of actually establishing the contact [...] I got to Bo-Waterside [a town on the other side of the border from Gendema in Liberia] and established contact with Eddie Massallay who was in charge of activities at Gendema [...] Chief Norman was in Monrovia. And then after two weeks I made the journey together with Eddie Massallay to Monrovia where I met Chief Norman. And then after two weeks I made the journey together with Eddie Massallay to Monrovia where I met Chief Norman [...] He was residing at one OAU villa. [...] Whilst I was waiting [to meet the chief] I learnt that Kamajors had retaken the [Mano River] Bridge [which crosses the border]. So I told the chief I wanted to go back to the Waterside to help. Since I was myself a Kamajor, I wanted to go back to the Waterside to help with things there [...] A team had already been made, so I volunteered to join the team, the team of Kamajors from Kenema District led by one Mohamed Bhonie Koroma had already volunteered. (SCSL 3 May 2006: 6–10. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

This story shows how Norman maintained contact with the various Kamajor groups while he was in Monrovia, by going through the Gendema Kamajors.

In September, Norman moved from the OAU Villas to ECOMOG's Nigerian battalion headquarters, which were on the site of Ricks Institute, a school located in the suburbs of Monrovia.¹⁴⁹ Norman moved because ECOMOG's authority on security matters was transferred to the Liberian government and the safety of Kamajors and CDF combatants operating in Liberia could no longer be guaranteed.¹⁵⁰ Charles Taylor, the leader of the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), had been elected president of Liberia after the First Liberian Civil War ended. The NPFL provided support to the RUF in Sierra Leone when that group rose up in rebellion. For the Kamajors and the CDF, Taylor becoming president in Liberia made the country a dangerous place to be. The other members of the Monrovia underground joined Norman at Ricks Institute in rooms provided by ECOMOG and continued their activities there. From their new headquarters, the group managed the material support being provided to the Kamajors and the CDF. The military materials and everyday commodities provided by ECOMOG were transported to the border in ECOMOG trucks. The Monrovia underground group also provided their own forms of support. They purchased goods in markets and shops in Monrovia and carried them to the border in Sparrow's car. They were able to travel freely between Monrovia and the border with Sierra Leone. Checkpoints were manned not only by Liberian security personnel, but also by ECOMOG soldiers. With the cooperation of ECOMOG, they were able to pass through these checkpoints without being stopped.

According to Sparrow, the Kamajors and CDF had bases on both the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean sides of the border. The organisation had administrative headquarters in the Liberian town of Bo-Waterside, and they also had a warehouse there. There they kept rice, *garri* (powdered cassava tubers), sugar and other provisions. Member of Parliament, M.S. Kallon, who had been sent by Kabbah's Government in Exile, was in charge of managing these supplies. Weapons and ammunition, however, were kept in a jungle base in Gendema on the Sierra Leone side of the border.

News spread among the different Kamajor groups throughout Sierra Leone that they need to travel to Gendema in order to meet with Norman, and he offered supplies. This information was spread in statements over the radio and through word of mouth. Based on this information, the different Kamajor groups began sending messengers to Gendema. One Kamajor made a statement before the Special Court for Sierra Leone regarding his having approached Norman to obtain supplies.

I was in Liberia at the time of the coup [...] After the coup, I came to understand that the AFRC/RUF were causing mayhem and atrocities in this country and I was obliged to come in order to see whether my mother was safe. My mother was living in Telu and she is still living there [...] I did find my mother. She was living in horrible conditions in hideout, called *sorkoei* in Mende [...] After assessing the situation with the CDF elements in the Jiamia [sic] Bongor Chiefdom [at the centre of which lies Telu] as a result of shortages of arms and ammunition, I returned there with the intention of locating and joining Chief Norman and others who were there [...] I did find him at a place called Ricks Institute in Virginia, outside Monrovia [...] I demanded from Chief Norman that the Kamajors in the Jiamia [sic] Bongor Chiefdom [...] were having some difficulties in terms of the shortages of arms and ammunition [...] Accordingly, the chief told me that ECOMOG, the former West African intervention force, which was based in Liberia, under whose protection he [was], Chief Norman, and others, could be the possible channel of assistance in that [...] He told me that the man who was in charge of logistics, to assist me in that direction, was one Mustapha Lumeh. He told me that there were no supplies available at that time, and that supplies recently been given him to be delivered to fighting forces at Gendema had been taken there. (SCSL 5 October 2006: 28–31. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

In this particular statement, the individual was unable to obtain supplies from Norman. However, the various Kamajor groups did in fact receive support in Gendema. They went to Gendema on foot to receive assistance supplies.

Norman gave orders to the Kamajors dispatched to Gendema. In the process of conducting my research, I met one Kamajor who said, 'Norman officially ordered me to take charge of the road between Bo and Kenema'. By distributing the supplies received from ECOMOG, Norman was able to maintain his position as patron, and conspicuously displayed his position as leader by giving out orders.

After Norman arrived in Liberia, initiators from around the country began to travel to Gendema. According to individuals in Gendema at the time, Kamoh Muniro, Alie Sesay, Kamoh Bonnie and Doctor Massallay also arrived in Gendema. The leader of the Kamajors in Kenema, Brima Bangura, also arrived. However, this doesn't mean that multiple shrines were founded in Gendema. In order to prevent fighting among the initiators, only one shrine was allowed, and that was the shrine of the initiator leader, Shuahibu Sheriff.

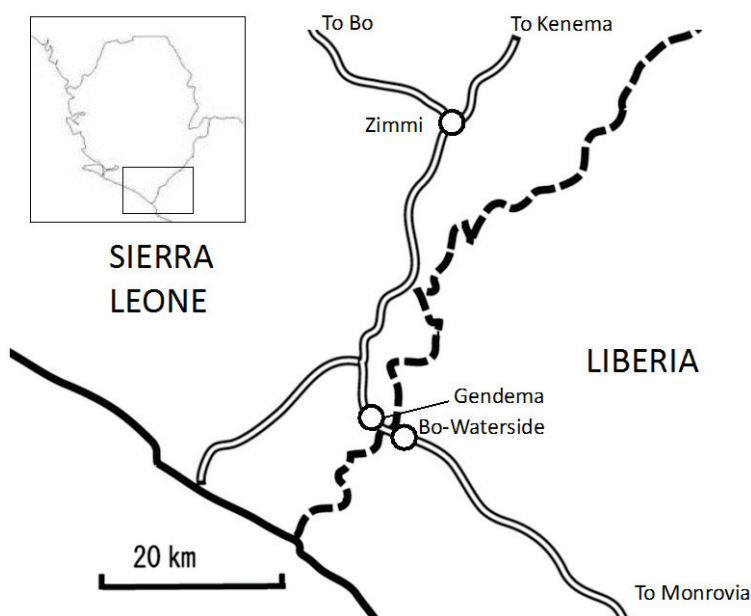
The initiators conducted initiation ceremonies at the Gendema shrine, and were also dispatched around the country to conduct Kamajor initiations elsewhere. Below is included the experience of one individual who was a Kamajor at that time. He was a Sierra Leonean living in Liberia, who transported marijuana from Sierra Leone to Liberia for sale. He said that he was captured by Kamajors on the way.

I was caught by Kamajors on my way back to Liberia from Sierra Leone. They thought I was a rebel, and had me taken to Tolo [in Kenema District]. I was asked to join the Kamajors then. I had no choice about joining the Kamajors. I was initiated by Kamoh Muniro who had come from Gendema.¹⁵¹

4. Military Activity in Gendema

For the Kamajors gathered on the Liberian border, the immediate objective was the capture of Zimmi. There is only road leading from the border town of Gendema into the Sierra Leone interior. That road passes through Zimmi, a base for the national army, and from there the road continues to the cities of Bo and

Figure 8-1: Locations of Gendema and Zimmi



Kenema. If the Kamajors were able to capture Zimmi, they would gain potential access to the urban centres of Bo and Kenema. The Gendema Kamajors continued to the right with the aim of capturing Zimmi (Figure 8-1).

In the months after the May 25 Coup, the Gendema Kamajors repeatedly battled against the junta forces in Zimmi. The front line moved back and forth between Zimmi and Gendema. Some Kamajors described the fighting as moving back and forth like a seesaw centred on Zimmi. The *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report described the situation at the time as can be seen below.

Between late 1997 and March 1998, many villages were burnt down in Soro Gbema Chiefdom by both Kamajors and RUF/AFRC forces to prevent the other fighting faction from settling there [...] Over 20 fierce and repeated battles took place between 28 May 1997 and late February 1998 to establish and maintain control of Zimmi [Makpele Chiefdom], which was a stronghold of the RUF/AFRC forces in the District. During the two first attacks launched by Kamajors coming

from the direction of Gofor 1,405 civilians were killed. As the fighting intensified between Kamajors and the RUF/AFRC in June, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) sheltered over 1,000 civilians. In early July, Kamajors regrouped and launched a third attack, coming from the main road of the chiefdom, like the previous attack. This attack was unsuccessful, although no casualties were reported. However, the RUF/AFRC forces burnt down houses of Kamajor supporters which made them flee the town, leaving their belongings in the hands of the RUF/AFRC forces. During the fourth attack in early August, many civilians, RUF/AFRC members and Kamajors, were wounded. Some of the wounded died in the bushes and the decomposing bodies were later discovered by civilians. While they took control, the Kamajors would control the town only for a very short period of time [...] In October 1997, RUF/AFRC forces in a four-truck convoy fell into an ambush near Fairo in Soro Gbema Chiefdom. Kamajors killed those caught in the ambush, together with the civilians who were travelling with them, because the Kamajors considered them to be collaborators. According to those Kamajors, those civilians used to lead the RUF/AFRC forces and show them the Kamajor hiding places. (Smith et al. 2004: 506–507)

The report also provides information on the Gendema Kamajors. Below are several news reports on the Gendema Kamajors obtained from the Sierra Leone Web internet site.¹⁵²

- 8 July 1997

Soldiers backed by RUF rebels of the ‘People’s Army’ captured the strategic Mano River Bridge on the Liberian border Monday after a battle with hundreds of Kamajors, senior army spokesman Major John Milton said Tuesday (I.E. Kamajors escaped to the Liberia side of the border). Sources in Kenema said at least 18 Kamajors were killed and that several soldiers were wounded. There were unconfirmed reports of deaths among the soldiers. Milton accused Nigeria of arming the Kamajors from Liberia. ‘The Kamajors are being supplied arms and ammunition by Nigeria’, he said.

- 10 July 1997

Reports reaching Freetown Thursday said 10 Kamajors were killed when a combined force of soldiers and RUF rebels attacked in a Kamajor-controlled area between Zimmi and the Mano River Bridge. One soldier was reported to have been killed in the fighting. The force was commanded by Colonel Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie, second in command of the RUF. 'The Kamajors retreated and some of them fled across the border into Liberia', Bockarie said, adding that two Kamajors had been captured.

- 29 July 1997

A Kamajor press release issued Tuesday in Monrovia, Liberia said Kamajors 'and other civil defence forces' captured the towns of Jendemah [Gendema], Gofor, Gissiwo, and Da Salamu in Pujehun District on July 28, forcing the army and RUF fighters 'to withdraw from all the areas between Zimmi Makpele and Sulima'. The statement said the Kamajors had destroyed three vehicles and captured one, a UNHCR vehicle, which is now being used by the Kamajors. All the vehicles were said to contain large quantities of weapons and ammunition. 'Some of the weapons now being used by the combined civil defence forces were also captured from retreating AFRC forces, some of whom have defected to the civil defence forces', the statement said.

- 4 August 1997

Kamajor commander Samuel Hinga Norman said Monday that the Kamajor militia has captured the town of Zimmi. Speaking from Monrovia, Norman claimed the Kamajors inflicted heavy casualties on the army and captured arms and ammunition.

- 14 August 1997

The Kamajor militia has reportedly been forced to retreat from Zimmi under heavy mortar and artillery fire from the army and its RUF allies. The fighting reportedly began at dawn on Wednesday when soldiers began a new offensive to regain control of the town [...] 'We will never give up this fight. We will fight back', Kamajor Commander Eddy Massali [sic] said.

These reports provide information on the fighting that took place around Zimmi. Some of the reports suggest that the Gendema Kamajors did not necessarily remain on Sierra Leonean territory during the fighting. Sometimes they escaped across the border into Liberia. The border helped the Gendema Kamajors keep an escape route open. ECOMOG was stationed on the border and was guarding it with advanced weaponry.

The Gendema Kamajors advanced from the border into the territory of Sierra Leone. The front line that separated the junta and Kamajor forces was an uninhabited zone of a few miles wide.¹⁵³ No one could be found on the front. The people who had lived there had all run away. Both the junta and the Kamajors and CDF periodically sent out patrols made up of a few combatants into this uninhabited region. Gun battles would erupt whenever the patrols would come across each other.

The gun battles took place during the civil war were actually different from what people would normally imagine in regards to the term 'battle'. Nathalie Włodarczyk describes battles in Sierra Leone as follows.

Battles as we have come to think of them in the west are virtually non-existent. That is to say, pitched battles between clearly defined forces engaging each other directly and with lethal intent. Instead, warfare in Sierra Leone tended to revolve around ambushes, tended to aim not so much at the physical destruction of the enemy but his retreating and ideally dispersing. The main aim is to induce the enemy force to relinquish their position and withdraw, leaving behind as many of their weapons as possible. As a result, although killing is by no means uncommon, the main aim of firing weapons is not to kill as many of the enemy as possible, but rather to display the superior power of one's own force and induce the enemy to flee – some have rather expressively referred to this aim as 'making as much noise as possible'. This also explains the predilection for weapons such as the AK-47, RPG7s, and mortars that are particularly suitable for making noise and displaying firepower, but less useful when engaging fighters in the forest if the aim is to actually hit them. This is particularly the case if little or no training

on how to use the weapons has been given. (Włodarczyk 2009: 119–120)

The description of battles provided here is thought to be applicable to the battles that took place between the Gendema Kamajors and the AFRC/RUF forces they were fighting. Because battles were fought in this way, whenever one group of combatants sensed that they were at a disadvantage in a fight, it wasn't uncommon for them to wait for nightfall and quietly withdraw from the engagement under the cover of darkness.

The front-line troops advanced on foot, and they would number between 20 and 30 people. As the combatants advanced, they would stop to drink at small streams and wells, and would carry their own rations. The rations were known as 'dry rations'. They included tennis ball-sized lumps of dried *garri* (powdered cassava) that had been mixed with water and sugar. Each individual carried multiple balls of this substance and would break pieces off to eat as they wished. *Garri* is usually eaten as a snack mixed with sugar or sugar-free condensed milk. It was often eaten as dry rations during the civil war, but after the war, no one eats it in the same way.

Operations were planned out by the four-person leadership team of the Gendema Kamajors, but a number of commanders are also said to have taken part in the planning. One leader said, 'My speciality was pre-dawn surprise attacks. Senior officers are usually still asleep before dawn. Only the soldiers are awake at that time. Attacking at that time induces panic'.

When fighting, senior officers were led away from the line of battle by their men to where it was less dangerous. If the officer was injured, the unit lost control: 'They had an eye for battle, but they were in a safe zone'.

What I thought impressive was that people considered life a thing to be cherished. Kamajors remember the names of those in their units who they lost in battle. Additionally, the lives of the combatants were not just thrown away. One Kamajor said:

Our strategy failed. We all scattered. At that time, two of us were missing. We got in the car and went looking for them but couldn't find them. Fortunately, they returned on their own.¹⁵⁴

The combatants used the car when someone was injured. When someone was injured on the front, they used the wireless to report to Gendema. They sent out a vehicle to pick up the injured individual from the frontline. When combatants were heavily injured, they were taken to the ECOMOG base in Liberia to be treated.

In some cases, enemy individuals were also captured during battle. Gendema Kamajors' leader, Ibrahim Tucker, explained.

We used everything at our disposal. We even used captured soldiers. When we captured junta soldiers or RUF rebels, they were brought into the Kamajors. We put them through the initiation ceremony and made them our comrades. They were trained in using weapons, so we made them conduct military training exercises.¹⁵⁵

As Tucker explained, captured soldiers and rebels of the junta were brought into the Kamajors and used as combatants. I spoke to one RUF combatant who was captured by the Gendema Kamajors and became a Kamajor himself.

Five of us were captured on the march by the Kamajors (while still in the RUF). Two of us were executed on the spot, and the other three of us were taken to Gendema. After being detained for a few days, I was told that I was to become a kamajor [...] After I was initiated, I started running Kamajors military training in Gendema.¹⁵⁶

When a number of individuals were captured, many times some of them were killed to serve as an example to the others. The remaining prisoners were later taken to base and detained there. After several days, the detainees were given a choice to be killed or to cooperate. Most didn't want to die. They chose to cooperate. Those who did choose to cooperate were put through initiation ceremonies. Regardless of ethnic origin, all those who were initiated became

Kamajors. This was true for those who couldn't understand the Mende language as well.

When captured combatants were incorporated into the Kamajors forces, each small unit of 20–30 individuals was limited to taking only one or two of those who had been captured to prevent the possibility of betrayal. It would have been suicidal for one of the captured combatants to betray their units on the Kamajor base, so there was little worry about treachery from them.

I was able to speak to the individual who served as the communications officer for the Gendema Kamajors about the work he did at the time of the civil war. The communications officer spent all of his time listening to the wireless and would pass on to the relevant person any necessary information that arrived. One example would be when a message came about a weapons and ammunition delivery. In such cases, a car would be dispatched to pick up the equipment.

The communications officer also said that he decrypted enemy messages. Armed forces use many codes to protect the information they transmit by wireless to ensure that the information doesn't get into the hands of the enemy. He said that he decoded such messages.

The RUF used codes when communicating via wireless. For example, the code they used to refer to the base in Kenema District was 'Base 3-5-D'. I wrote down all the codes I heard in a notebook every day, and tried to decode what each one meant. I made a list of the codes to compare against past records and events.¹⁵⁷

One commander praised the communications officer for having contributed greatly to Gendema Kamajor operations through his code-breaking work.¹⁵⁸ This communications officer also came up with new codes for the Kamajors and CDF to use.

5. Sparrow and the CDF Special Forces

The Gendema Kamajors aimed to capture Zimmi, but Zimmi did not fall readily. For this reason, they moved to strengthen their numbers by mobilising Liberian combatants. The unit manned by

Liberian combatants was called ‘the CDF Special Forces’, and the person who led it was my research collaborator, Sparrow. Through Sparrow’s help, I was able to interview many former combatants. Here I would like to look in more detail into the CDF Special Forces, in order to gain a better understanding of the essence of the PC network that lay at the heart of the Kamajors and the CDF.

The Formation of the CDF Special Forces

Sparrow decided to mobilise the Liberian combatants in September 1997 in order to break a stalemate with enemy forces. The Gendema Kamajors didn’t have enough personnel with sufficient military skills. Many of the Kamajors who had gathered in Gendema had come from rural villages and had never touched a gun. In contrast, the Liberian combatants had battle experience. They provided the Kamajors with the know-how needed to effectively manage and organise an armed force, and also taught them about firearm use and military tactics. One Liberian member of the CDF Special Forces spoke about the Kamajors, saying that, ‘The Kamajors basically had no military training. They would run away whenever they heard a loud noise, and some died in accidents because they didn’t know how to use their weapons’.

Sparrow was suited to bringing the Kamajors and CDF together with the Liberian forces. His father was close to Norman and Sparrow himself was a member of the underground. Moreover, he was born to a royal family. In other words, Sparrow occupied a social position amongst the people of Sierra Leone that enabled him to serve as a commander in the Kamajors. In addition, Sparrow had connections to Liberia. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Liberia United Defence Force (LUDF) was formed early in the civil war by mobilising Liberian refugees, and Sparrow was trained in this group (The LUDF later changed its name to the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy [ULIMO] and invaded Liberia). This was how Sparrow had built a relationship with the Liberian combatants, and he was later made the commander of the Liberian combatants fighting with the Kamajors and the CDF.

Liberian combatants were brought together through their connection to Sparrow. His connections to ULIMO played a

particularly large role. The person responsible for bringing the largest number of combatants was a Sierra Leonean member of ULIMO named Ibrahim Jalloh. Jalloh and Sparrow had both been in the LUDF. Sparrow didn't join ULIMO, but Ibrahim Jalloh did cross into Liberia with the ULIMO combatants. The details on this were previously covered in Chapter 5. After the First Liberian Civil War, Jalloh lived in Monrovia after being demobilised. He spoke of his experience.

It was after the coup. After the Kabbah government was overthrown, Sparrow contacted me saying that they needed manpower. That was when I called on my colleagues in ULIMO. I'm the one who mobilised the Special Forces. I would tell someone, and they would tell someone else. That was how we got the word out. Most of the Special Forces were made up of ULIMO members, but there were others from other military groups as well. In 72 hours, we had brought together 100 people. Even since the force was disbanded, we have stayed in contact with each other.¹⁵⁹

It was because he mobilised the majority of combatants that he took a higher rank in the Special Forces. Jalloh also had experience fighting in Liberia. Sparrow also stated that Jalloh had gathered together the majority of the combatants who made up the Special Forces. With the end of the First Liberian Civil War, the ULIMO was dismantled. In that timing, Sparrow approached Jalloh to tell him of their need for fighters, and approached Jalloh to tell him of their need for fighters. Jalloh then contacted his former subordinates and colleagues. In other words, the combatants were brought together using not only vertically structured connections, but also using their cross-sectional relationships. With that, the combatants gathered together were also reorganised as part of the Kamajors/CDF PC network.

However, Jalloh was not the only one who mobilised combatants. Others who recruited combatants were Kofi, a former Liberian army soldier and friend of Sparrow who spent much time at Sparrow's house, and a civilian named Kanneh who was friends with a number of combatants. These two men had no jobs and no money, so they

often visited Sparrow's house to have dinner. It was by harnessing these personal networks that the first members of the CDF Special Forces were brought together.

I spoke with one of the former combatants from Liberia who was mobilised at that time. He told me how he was mobilised by the Special Forces.

Sparrow contacted one person, and word spread from there. He pulled in 52 people from the ULIMO-J (a split group from the ULIMO). Sparrow took command after we crossed into Sierra Leone. We conducted military exercises with the Kamajors in Gendema.¹⁶⁰

The Liberian combatants who answered the call stayed for a brief time at Sparrow's house and then were delivered to the border by car. At that point, ECOMOG's authority was reduced, so it would have been dangerous to stay in Monrovia. The first 50 individuals to arrive at the border were sent out on a mission. They were to cross the border and capture Gendema, which had been taken by the junta after the Gendema Kamajors had been chased out of Sierra Leone into Liberia. Ibrahim Jalloh spoke of that time.

The Gendema Kamajors had been driven over to the Liberian side of the border. The Special Forces were ordered to take Gendema, and that evening, they received a car and weapons.¹⁶¹

The Special Forces were able to temporarily recapture Gendema, but it was quickly lost again to the junta forces. They said that they were unable to keep the town for longer as they had no logistical support. At a later date, once sufficient logistical support had been prepared, the Gendema Kamajors were able again to recapture Gendema after a number of battles fought.¹⁶² The Kamajors were thereafter able to return to Sierra Leone and the Gendema Kamajors were never driven over the border into Liberia again.

Among the Gendema Kamajors, the Special Forces were praised as a group of highly skilled soldiers. I heard the following statements made of the Special Forces.¹⁶³

‘They (the Special Forces) were very intelligent. The only reason we were able to capture Zimmi was because they were with us.’

‘This guy (Sparrow) brought the Liberians to us and made us stronger.’

(Statements by Eddie Massallay)

Organisational Structure of the CDF Special Forces

As previous research has shown, the organisation of the Kamajors and CDF was based upon patron–client relationships. In other words, combatants only followed the orders of their patrons, and in the case of the Kamajors, one’s patron would be one’s direct commander. In other words, they had no obligation to follow the orders of those above the chain of command from their own commanders (It was a different story if that officer higher in the chain of command was providing some sort of reward). The situation was similar among the Liberian combatants. In both cases, the loyalty of combatants lay with their direct superiors. Massallay spoke of the Special Forces in the following way.

They were Liberians. They were not loyal to Norman. They weren’t affiliated with any chieftdom either. They were following Sparrow only. That’s why Sparrow was the head of the Special Forces. He is Sierra Leonean, and is knowledgeable about Liberia.¹⁶⁴

The Liberian combatants did not share the Kamajor/CDF propaganda goal of returning democracy to Sierra Leone and restoring Kabbah to his position as president, so they were made into a special unit under a different chain of command from the Kamajors. That was the CDF Special Forces. As leader of that unit, Sparrow had access to the material support being provided to the Gendema Kamajors, and he distributed it to the combatants of the Special Forces.

After the establishment of the Special Forces, Sparrow was brought in to join the other four individuals who made up the leadership structure of the Gendema Kamajors and became involved in the decision-making process. He later came to be called ‘Adjutant-

General' among the Gendema Kamajors. The members of the Kamajors and CDF used military titles as nicknames, and the titles do not indicate any formal position within the command structure (see Hoffman 2007b).

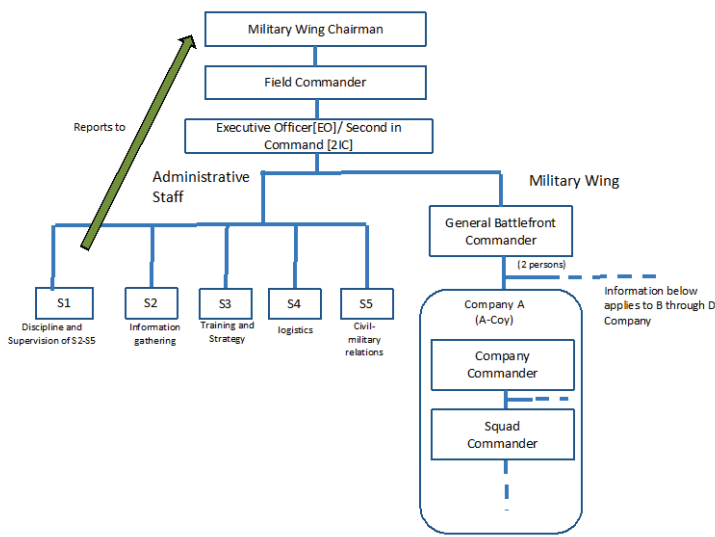
The Special Forces clarified the command structure by basing it on the military. They also installed a person to manage logistical support. The Gendema Kamajors had many people who were called commanders, so the chain of command was unclear, and who was meant to follow whose orders was also unclear. In contrast, the Special Forces decided upon a hierarchy and made the chain of command clear. They used the structure of the official armed forces as a template. It is possible that they based it on the organisational structure of ULIMO, which to a certain extent followed the official army structure as it comprised former members of the Liberian Army. Figure 8-2 provides a chart showing how the Special Forces were organised. Sparrow stood as head of the unit. In imitation of ULIMO, his title was 'chairman, military wing'.¹⁶⁵ His role was administrative in nature. When the Gendema Kamajors made strategic decisions, Sparrow would determine what role the Special Forces would play. He also acquired the supplies and personnel the Special Forces required. Ibrahim Jalloh was in the second position in the Special Forces as Field Commander. Third in the chain of command was Jalloh's 'Second in Command' or '2.I.C.' (Details about this individual are unknown.)

Below that, individuals were separated into military personnel and administrative staff. Leading the military units were two General Battlefront Commanders. Under their command were four companies of approximately 30 individuals each: A Company to D Company. Companies were separated into squads of ten combatants each, who were led by either a squad commander or deputy squad commander who was required to be able to read and write in English.

There was also a hierarchy among the combatants, as it was described to me, 'We awarded the soldiers stars so that they would know whose orders they had to follow'. Generally, in a regular army, the highest officer ranks are shown using stars. The officers are known as 'Two-Star', 'Three-Star', etc. The more stars an individual displays, the higher the person's rank is. Following that example, the

combatants displayed their own ranks by the number of stars they displayed.

Figure 8-2: Organisational structure of the CDF Special Forces



(Note: Chart based on interviews conducted by author.)

Next, we discuss the administrative staff. First, Section 1 (S1) was established to manage discipline among the administrative staff. Next, Sections 2 through 5 (S2–S5) were set up to handle information gathering, training and strategy, logistics and military relations, respectively. S1 supervised the staff of S2 through S5. The administrative staff was organised into a structure similar to that seen among section staff in the regular army.

The combatants of the Special Forces did not necessarily take part in military training. Most of them had already gained sufficient military experience in Liberia. Special Forces combatants apparently provided military training to the Kamajors who were insufficiently skilled. Sparrow explained.

Even when someone was inexperienced, two weeks of military training was enough. In the first week, they learned how to use an

automatic weapon and how to disassemble and assemble it. In the next week, they learned simple marching skills and basic military strategy. For example, they would be taught that the longer a bullet flies, the higher it rises. That is why they have to lie down to fire. They then practised those skills for the remainder of the week.

The Liberian combatants who fought in the Special Forces brought with them new knowledge to teach the Kamajors. As they gained knowledge of military strategy and reorganised the group's structure, that influx of know-how served as a catalyst for change among the Gendema Kamajors.

The Special Forces started out with around 100 personnel and continued to expand. Sparrow described the situation as follows.

The Kamajors selected their own units. If one unit was weak, it meant that its commander was unpopular. Kamajors wanted to join units that were strong. That was much safer for each of them. I accepted anyone who volunteered to join the Special Forces. A unit with many personnel is a strong unit.

By the end of the civil war, it was said that the Special Forces had swelled to over 300 members. When personnel numbers increased, the number of squads was increased. When the numbers of combatants increased, it was considered to be proof of a unit's superiority.

The narrative above illustrate that the Kamajors organisation was based on patron–client relationships with fluid ties, and that it was common for individuals to change patrons.

Organisation of the Gendema Kamajors

With the successes of the CDF Special Forces, the rest of Gendema Kamajors also systemised their command structure. The know-how on armed force management brought by the Liberian combatants seems to have brought about change among the Gendema Kamajors. One of leaders in Gendema Kamajors, Ibrahim Tucker, explained.

When we saw how successful the Special Forces were, we learned how important it was to organise our own forces. The Kamajors were organised to exact standards. The Gendema Kamajors were all designated the first battalion. The majority of the Kamajors that had gathered in Gendema had been sent from the chiefdoms. They were organised into units based on the chiefdom they had come from. We organised the military structure based around the chiefdom units.¹⁶⁶

With the organisation of the Kamajors, Tucker was made the first battalion commander. Tucker explained the structure of the first battalion to me. It comprised four companies. The four company commanders took part in the strategy meetings with the leadership executive. Like the Special Forces, the companies were made up of platoons of around 30 individuals, and each platoon was split into squads of around ten combatants. The number of platoons and squads was increased to accommodate the increasing Kamajor numbers.

I was told that that first battalion also installed administrative staff, including a logistics and supply officer, battalion officer, battalion commander and intelligence officer (I was unable to confirm the roles of each officer). According to Tucker, the only Kamajor group to attempt a reorganisation were the Gendema Kamajors. He said that while both large and small groups of Kamajors were active in various places, none of them were able to improve efficiency.

Sparrow's Capture

The Special Forces contributed greatly to the operations of the Gendema Kamajors. However, less than two months after the Special Forces were formed, Sparrow was arrested by the Liberian government. Sparrow said that it was in September or October, and he talked about the time of his arrest.

The war continued, and supplies had run out. I left for the capital [Monrovia] to explain the situation to Norman, but this was after he had already left for Guinea. I travelled around Monrovia by car visiting friend after friend to try and borrow from them, but at some point I

was followed by the security forces. A car came from behind and stopped me, and I was taken in. There was another person in my car, but he managed to escape.

After Sparrow's arrest, an investigation was begun at the Monrovia underground's headquarters at Peugeot Garage. According to another member of the underground, 'more than ten cars were stolen'.¹⁶⁷ Sparrow's arrest warned Norman and other members of the underground of the danger they were in. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission discussed the situation Norman found himself in at that time.

Hinga Norman had a very hard life in Liberia: he could never stay in one place for a long time [...] So he was sleeping in a certain location for two days, then in a different location for the next two days. All the time he was in the hands of ECOMOG, so Charles Taylor never saw him. But every time they [Taylor's men] heard about him, they sent their bodyguards to get him. It's just fortunate that they failed. (TRC 3A 2004: 259)

The move of the underground from Peugeot Garage to the Nigerian ECOMOG headquarters at Ricks Institute was discussed previously. Sparrow's arrest and the following events were the catalyst to that move. After the move to Ricks Institute, the group provided support services to the Kamajors and CDF from there. After Sparrow disappeared, leadership of the CDF Special Forces continued to operate under Ibrahim Jalloh, who was in the second rank in the Special Forces.

* * *

This chapter covered the development of the Civil War after the May 25 Coup with a focus on the activity of the Gendema Kamajors who continued their fight with the junta by making use of the Liberian border. Here we summarise the discussions in the chapter, separated into the details related to the Kamajors/CDF as a whole, and the one on the CDF Special Forces.

First, we look at the Kamajors/CDF.

1. The dissolution of the Kamajors was ordered after the May 25 coup. Kamajors in various areas opposed the order. The Kamajors who gathered in the border town of Gendema (what we call ‘the Gendema Kamajors’ in this book) came to play a central role in the fighting against the junta.

2. The Gendema Kamajors called on Norman to raise the legitimacy of their group. In addition, they were able to continue fighting obtaining the support of ECOMOG.

3. Norman distributed the military supplies received from ECOMOG under his own name to the various Kamajor groups, thereby maintaining his patron status.

Considering this in light of the hypothesis, the Gendema Kamajors can be said to have emerged as a dominant PC network.

Next, we review the CDF Special Forces.

The CDF Special Forces were made up of mobilised Liberian combatants, and operated as a unit of the Gendema Kamajors. The CDF Special Forces were organised using Sparrow’s LUDF connections to mobilise new personnel. In other words, by gathering personnel using the rhizomatic network of personal connections, a new PC network was able to be formed.

In this way, we have been able to confirm that the Gendema Kamajors emerged as a dominant PC network. However, that position was taken away from the Gendema Kamajors by other Kamajors groups. We discuss that process in the following chapter.

Replacing the Dominant PC Network The AFRC Administration – Period II (November 1997 to March 1998)

This chapter discusses the emergence of a new dominant PC network in the Kamajor group that ended up taking the place of the Gendema Kamajors.

As we discussed in the previous chapter, the Gendema Kamajors called Samuel Hinga Norman to Liberia and made him their leader. Norman then utilised the support the Gendema Kamajors had obtained from ECOMOG by distributing it among the other Kamajor groups in order to solidify his position as leader of the Kamajors/CDF as a whole. In this chapter, we show how Norman abandoned the Gendema Kamajors and moved on to another Kamajor group. When he did so, he took with him the ECOMOG support the Gendema Kamajors had won. He then utilised this new group to continue his distribution of supplies to other Kamajors groups in different areas. In this way, Norman was able to maintain his position as overall leader of the Kamajors and the CDF. The new Kamajor group to which Norman moved took over from the Gendema Kamajors in having the most dominant PC network. In this book, I call this new powerful group ‘Base Zero Kamajors’.

Section 1 presents the process by which Norman moved from Gendema to the Kamajor group at Base Zero. Section 2 provides a look at the activities at Base Zero. The Kamajors at Base Zero were kept under sufficient control, and there were many incidents of human rights violations. Within that environment, Norman exercised his power arbitrarily. In Section 3, we illustrate how the Kamajors/CDF engaged in combined operations with ECOMOG to successfully restore President Kabbah and his administration to government.

1. Samuel Hinga Norman Leaves the Gendema Kamajors

Why Did Norman Move?

Sometime around November of 1997, Samuel Hinga Norman moved from Liberia to Tihun in Bonth District. He left the Gendema Kamajors behind and became a leader of another Kamajor group. The Tihun Kamajor group was where one would find Allieu Kondewa, the initiator prosecuted by the Sierra Leone Special Court (see Chapter 7). After Norman completed his move to Tihun, the Kamajor group there became the most dominant PC network in the Kamajors/CDF organisation as a whole. Their base came to be known as 'Base Zero' after Norman's arrival.

One question stands out, however: why did Norman move to Base Zero? His reasons can be summarised in three points. The first reason was that security responsibilities in Liberia were being transferred from ECOMOG to the new Taylor government. The May 25 Coup occurred just as the First Liberian Civil War was coming to an end, and the first general election in Liberia since the end of the civil war was held on 19 July 1997. The presidency was overwhelmingly won by Charles Taylor, the former leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), an armed rebel group that supported the RUF in Sierra Leone.¹⁶⁸ After the ballots were counted and the results confirmed, Taylor began his tenure as a president of Liberia on 3 August. President Taylor had issues with the level of security on the Liberian border with Sierra Leone, and began a crackdown on the Kamajors/CDF active there. The following is an excerpt from a news article at the time.

Liberian President Charles Taylor said Thursday that the crisis in Sierra Leone is a threat to Liberia's security. 'There is a real threat of the activities on the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, but that threat is not sufficient for our citizens to panic', Taylor said in a national radio broadcast. He said the Liberian government had arrested an unspecified number of Kamajor militia members and seized 'massive documentations, including hospital records and rosters which prove that there is a threat'.¹⁶⁹

This statement was made after my research collaborator, Sparrow, was arrested.

Taylor aimed to drive ECOMOG out from Liberia, where they were providing support to the Kamajors/CDF. ECOMOG was responsible for disarmament and military restructuring in Liberia after the civil war, but the newly elected President Taylor refused to allow ECOMOG to get involved. ECOMOG began to gradually withdraw from Liberia.

The responsibility of border security was also transferred from ECOMOG to the new government of Liberia under Charles Taylor. When ECOMOG was still in charge of managing the border, the Kamajors and CDF were able to travel back and forth across the border freely. Combatants were apparently even allowed to enter Liberia armed with their weapons. However, after border control authority had been transferred to the new government, the Kamajors and CDF were no longer permitted to enter the country armed. With that development, the Kamajors and the CDF were no longer able to make use of Liberia as a rear base.

Norman's second reason for moving to Base Zero was that he did not get along very well with the leaders of the Gendema Kamajor group. He apparently had a particularly difficult time getting along with Eddie Massallay. As was previously mentioned, decisions among the Gendema Kamajors were made through mutual consultation with the leadership acting as a sort of council-like body. I spoke to Eddie Massallay about Samuel Hinga Norman and he responded as follows.

We [the leaders of the Gendema Kamajors] were a built like a meritocracy and kept everything transparent. When someone raised ideas that was unreasonable or inefficient, we could raise our objections to them. [As for the command structure,] we organised ourselves into a military-like system with a command hierarchy so that orders could be passed on more smoothly. Norman wasn't very happy with that system. With that system, he wouldn't be able to do what he wanted because we could refuse his command. Even though Norman made a personal order to a commander diverting the commanding structure, a commander refused saying 'These aren't orders coming from above'.

He wouldn't be able to freely move supplies around as he wanted to anymore either. He wanted to win against the junta and the RUF, but he also wanted to maintain his own power. Norman wanted his own army that would listen to his orders and follow them exactly. In fact, he once tried to get a mid-level commander to do something for him. He called him over and gave him an order, but the commander refused to follow it, answering, 'That order isn't from my superiors. I can't bypass the command structure'. Norman wanted an army that he could say, 'Do this' and they would do it right away. I don't know if that all made him angry or not, but Norman gathered up all the ammunition, and took it along with all the administrative staff with him to Base Zero. All of the Gendema soldiers [the Kamajors] were just left behind as they were in Gendema.¹⁷⁰

I heard similar statements from Ibrahim Tucker, who served as the battalion commander of the Gendema Kamajors, and also from Sparrow. In fact, the statements were also heard on different occasions. It is apparent that there was a disagreement between Norman and the leaders of the Gendema Kamajors in regards to how the organisation should be structured.

The third reason Norman had for moving away from Gendema was that he was invited to Base Zero by the Kamajor group in Tihun in Bonthe District. We cover this invitation in greater detail below.

Messengers from Bonthe District

The Kamajor group in Tihun is the one which I describe in Chapters 6 and 7. The group had established an initiation ceremony by assembling initiators in Kale, and had moved from Kale to Tihun in 1996. When those Kamajors travelled to Tihun, the initiators scattered around the country. Only Kondewa remained in Tihun to conduct the initiation ceremonies. By the time of the May 25 Coup, the rebels had been driven from Bonthe District and there was little danger of rebel attack. However, this Kamajor group remained strong and often engaged in battle with the SLA (Smith et al. 2004: 441). Even after the May 25 Coup, the Tihun Kamajor group continued to oppose junta forces, and determined not to comply with the orders of the military regime. As mentioned in the previous

chapter, Kamajor groups from around the country sent out messengers after the May 25 Coup in order to initiate contact with Norman. The Kamajors in Tihun were no exception, but what made them different from the other Kamajor groups was that they invited Norman to take over as the leader of their group. One Kamajor who was affiliated with the Tihun Kamajor group made the statement below.

After the May 25 Coup, the chiefs and elders had a meeting. We decided that we wouldn't recognise the military regime. At that time, Kondewa wasn't in Tihun. We asked Lahai Bangura¹⁷¹ to carry out emergency initiations in Mokossie [in Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom in Bonthe District].¹⁷² That way it would be cheaper. [...] Kondewa came back from Freetown later on. We had the unit move and set up defensive positions in Sumbuya Junction. We had seized some weapons and ammunitions in fighting against the army, but we ended up using it all and we ran out. At that point, we sent messengers to Gendema. Moinina Fofana, Jaiah Kamara, Doctor Massallay and Lahai Bangura [...] were selected as messengers. Allieu Kondewa recorded a message on tape, and we had the messengers take the tape and its message with them.¹⁷³

According to this statement, one of the messengers dispatched from Tihun was Moinina Fofana, the third person to be indicted by the Sierra Leone Special Court. Moinina Fofana was born in Bonthe District's Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom in 1950, and he was a merchant before the civil war. Although he was unable to read and write, he managed to build up a fortune through his business and he even served as a source of financial support for the Kamajors during the civil war (Kelsall 2009: 37).

The messengers dispatched from Tihun made their way to Gendema by foot. For a few months after their arrival, they joined operations conducted by the Gendema Kamajors, and as initiators, Doctor Massallay and Lahai Bangura conducted initiation ceremonies in Gendema. Moinina Fofana brought together the Kamajors of Bonthe District under himself as commander.¹⁷³ Jaiah Kamara managed the warehouse.

Initially, Norman didn't accept the messengers' invitation to go to Tihun. However, he had actually started considering Bonthe District as an operating base from around the time he started his activities in Gendema (TRC 3A 2004: 271). Apparently, at some point, he began to periodically visit Tihun by helicopter. It is possible that Norman visited Tihun multiple times before deciding to move his base of operations there. A Kamajor from Tihun described a visit by Norman.

A helicopter arrived three months after we sent the messengers to Gendema. Our messengers were in the helicopter, and they had brought Norman with them. They also brought arms and ammunition with them. Norman said, 'I give you arms and ammunition. In their stead, we need manpower'.

Once Norman had arrived in Tihun, the area came to be known by the name of Base Zero. Around this time, Norman was still apparently travelling back and forth between Tihun and his base in Liberia. Within a month of Norman's arrival in Tihun, the base had been moved from Tihun to the town of Talia. Talia came to be known as the new Base Zero. One Kamajors stated that, 'Base Zero was what we called the place the Norman was'.

The helicopter Norman was using seems to have been independently acquired by the Kamajors/CDF. It was not acquired from ECOMOG as a part of its support. Piloting of the helicopter was handled by a former soldier who had once served in the British Army. The Kamajor who brought the pilot into Kamajors/CDF managed the operational schedule of the helicopter. This Kamajor was born to one of the ruling families, so he had close relationships with politicians belonging to the SLPP. The helicopter was used to carry Samuel Hinga Norman and other members of the Kamajors/CDF leadership from place to place to deliver relief supplies and for other operations. It can be said that this helicopter enabled the Kamajors/CDF to connect with the outside world. More specifically, the helicopter allowed the Kamajors/CDF to maintain access to the ECOMOG Nigerian forces in Liberia, to Lungi Airport around 15 km from Freetown (which remained under the control of

ECOMOG forces even during the period), and to President Kabbah's Government in Exile in Conakry, Guinea.

The Move from Tihun to Talia

The new Base Zero was located in Talia, a town in Yawbeko Chiefdom (See Photograph 9-1). The town of Talia can be found around ten kilometres from the former location of Base Zero in Tihun. Albert Nallo, one of the Kamajors in Base Zero, gave a statement regarding the details of the move from Tihun to Talia in front of the Sierra Leone Special Court.

So the paramount chief of Sogbini [chiefdom where Tihun locates], Chief Steven Wonnie Bio IV, drop us from Tihun Sogbini, the whole Kamajor including Kondewa because Kondewa had already taken his paramount chieftaincy Pa. He did not have any regard for the chief. He had been doing a lot of bad things [...] he initiated a particular society there. When one initiate, he pass through an ambush. When he struck his eye on a tree and the eye busts [...] One of the initiates – we had one stage in our society that we had to go through which we called a Kamajor ambush when you have been initiated. In that particular ambush the man was not able to go through. During that time one of his eyes got bust. You know, he struck the eye on a palm tree. So when he struck the palm tree, Kondewa and the others took him carried him to a secluded area and they killed him. They burnt him [...] This was what the paramount chief Steven Wonnie Bio IV saw and he said, 'Kondewa, move your team from my chiefdom' [...] In that Kamajor society you have different stages through which an initiate will go through. So the stage that the man reached was called Kamajor ambush. That is, all initiates will stand in a line, they will make two straight lines and it is between that line that an initiate will walk and they had whips. During that time when he was walking – during time when the initiate is walking in that line the other initiates would beat you seriously. And when you are beaten and you fall to the ground, then you've left the ambush. They will take you and carry you somewhere where they will kill you and burn you to ashes [...] When a human being has been burnt and turned into ashes it is called *tevie*. They [the initiator and his cabinet]¹⁷⁴ use it to mark our bodies to join the Kamajor society. [...]

So the chief drove the Kamajor group from Tihun and Moinina Fofana and MT Collier took me to Talia Yawbeko which we call Base Zero. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 18–26)

Photograph 9-1: Talia



(Photograph by author, 2009)

This is how the Kamajors group came to make its move to Talia.

I was able to talk with the Kamajor who made the decision to build a new Base Zero in Talia. The individual was a part of the ruling family of Banta Chiefdom in Moyamba District. He spoke about the time from the coup on 25 May, until the time he joined the Kamajors.

I was living on Pademba Road in Freetown at the time of the May 25 Coup. I was a student activist at the time. They were watching me, so after the coup, I started to think I might be in danger. First, I ran away to this hotel [the same hotel at which the author stayed]. But, then I thought that this hotel might be dangerous too, because soldiers were bringing their girlfriends to stay here. People were plundering the city then. I hid away in the hotel for several days, but then worried that I had to leave while I still could, and I escaped to my hometown in Gbangbantoke [in Banta Chiefdom].

The Kamajors were already in Gbangbantoke then, and so I joined them there. Paramount chief, Tommy Gbagra, was the leader of the Kamajors. Allieu Kondewa conducted my initiation ceremony in Gbangbantoke. Gbangbantoke and Tihun aren't that far away from each other. You can travel back and forth between them by bike or car.

Kondewa spent a lot of time with us. He had a girlfriend there and could use a car whenever he wanted. I think he liked it in Gbangbantoke, too. I started thinking about how we could make the Kamajors stronger. Back when I was living in Freetown, I met someone who used to serve in the British Army. He gave me advice that helped me choose the area for the base.

At first, Gbangbantoke seemed suitable, but when I saw Talia, I realised that it matched the advice my friend gave me. Talia had a school with grounds big enough for a helicopter to take off and land. It had a river nearby and a well with a pump. So, Talia had a large and secure supply of water. A base at Talia would be able to garrison a large number of combatants. So, I decided that Talia was a suitable place to build a base.

I recommended to Kondewa that he begin negotiations with the paramount chief of Yawbeko Chiefdom [where Talia is located], and we received permission to use Talia as our base. Norman travelled to the site by helicopter to see whether it would be suitable for a base or not, but his reaction wasn't good. He said, 'If I come, I will come in two days', and then he returned to Liberia. He didn't come two days later. I gave up and went back to Gbangbantoke, and then I received news that Norman had travelled to Talia again by helicopter [...]

I travelled to Liberia by helicopter and stayed there for two days. After I bought the clothes and other things I needed in Monrovia, we had discussions with ECOMOG about what sort of support was necessary. Two days later, I withdrew 4,000 dollars [US] that my girlfriend living in Britain had sent me, then I took some money and medicine back with me to Talia.¹⁷⁵

This statement illustrates how Norman was still travelling back and forth from Liberia when the base was moved from Tihun to Talia. Norman did not completely abandon Liberia until after the Kamajor

group had completed its move to Talia. In the end, Norman moved to Talia and he was allocated a place to live in town.

Alongside Norman's move, the Tihun messengers who had been dispatched to Gendema returned to the base at Talia. In addition, Mustapha Lumeh and Andrew Hardin were enticed away from the Monrovia underground to join the Kamajors/CDF, and they too travelled to Talia. Arriving later in Talia were M.S. Dumbuya and the members of Parliament who were sent to Liberia on the orders of President Kabbah. As previously mentioned, Talia came to be known as the new Base Zero, and as the headquarters of this Kamajor group. Talia also ended up becoming home to the paramount chiefs who had found it necessary to evacuate from the surrounding chiefdoms. With the move of Samuel Hinga Norman, the Base Zero Kamajors began to engage in battle with the junta forces from that base in Talia.

The Gendema Kamajors Left Behind

Once Norman moved his own headquarters, the group that stood at the heart of the Kamajors/CDF changed from the Gendema Kamajors to the Kamajor group at Base Zero. One of leaders in Gendema Kamajor, Ibrahim Tucker, spoke of the events, saying, 'Norman made us into pariahs'. He continued:

So, Oka [the author's nickname], do you know why we started to call the base 'Base Zero'? We [the Kamajors who had gathered in Gendema] were called Base One. That's because we were the first base to be made. Norman worked from his headquarters at Base One to expand the activities of the CDF. But, then Norman found a new base at a place called Talia. From then on, he decided to make Talia his headquarters. The number before 'one' is 'zero'. It's just basic mathematics. So, he called his new headquarters 'Base Zero'. But, they couldn't call themselves the 'zeroth battalion', so that's why they took the name of 'first battalion' from us. After that, the Base Zero Kamajors became the first battalion. We [the Kamajors at Base One] came to be known as the second battalion. But, the people at Base Zero were not organised. We put in a chain of command to make sure of that. We were superior to them.¹⁷⁶

The Gendema Kamajors went from being the first battalion to being the second battalion, and Ibrahim Tucker's position of the first battalion commander also changed to the second battalion commander. The Gendema Kamajors began to receive less support from ECOMOG. After Norman moved to Base Zero, relief supplies from ECOMOG's Nigerian battalion headquarters (at Ricks Institute) in Monrovia were directly transported to Base Zero by a helicopter. Those supplies stopped being transported via Gendema on the border. The Gendema Kamajors were able to continue to receive material support from ECOMOG forces, but the amount they received apparently dropped drastically. Eddie Massallay explained.

The Gendema soldiers [the Kamajors] were left behind in Gendema. We were still receiving supplies, but we had less than before. First, we had weapon shortages. In order to obtain weapons, we started selling diamonds to ECOMOG so we could supplement our supplies. But we didn't want everyone to know that, so we hid it from the other Kamajor groups around us.¹⁷⁷

Sparrow was also unaware of this situation (They had begun selling diamonds after he was arrested and detained in Liberia). While I was speaking to Eddie Massallay about this, Sparrow sat beside us listening in, and he was surprised to hear Eddie's story.

2. Activities in Base Zero

The Base Zero Kamajors group took over from the Gendema Kamajors as the recipients of ECOMOG material support, and they too distributed those supplies to Kamajors groups in other areas. By taking charge of supply distribution, the regional Kamajors came to be affiliated with Base Zero.

Base Zero and the Other Kamajor Groups

Norman put out a call for Kamajors around Sierra Leone to gather in Talia. Word spread throughout the country and in response those other Kamajors groups began to dispatch people to Norman

in Talia. I spoke to one man who was a teenager at the time and living in Bo. He described how he came to make his way to Talia.

Bo is a Mende town. After the May 25 Coup, the army and the Kamajors began to fight. It was dangerous for young men to be in Bo town. Older men and women had no problem. But, young men were suspected of being Kamajors, and they would be prosecuted. If you didn't know someone in the army, staying behind was dangerous. That's why I decided to go back to my own chiefdom [...] I got permission from the paramount chief of my chiefdom and left with some other villagers to where Mama Munda was. After she gave us our initiation, we returned to our chiefdom. We got word that Norman had put out a call for people to come to where he was. We had only been back for a few weeks before we were ordered to go to Talia. I went with other young men from my chiefdom by foot to Talia.¹⁷⁸

In addition, one man from Moyamba District spoke to me about how he joined a group of escaping Kamajors and went with them to Talia. Once he arrived in Talia, he became a Kamajor.

Escaping Kamajors went to the village during the time of the AFRC regime. I joined them and made my way to Base Zero. I was screened in Talia and I became a Kamajor.¹⁷⁹

Military training exercises were conducted at Base Zero. However, the quality of that training was apparently quite low when compared to the training that had been provided at Gendema. In Gendema, there were many people who had fought during the Liberian civil war or who had undergone military training through ECOMOG. In contrast, Base Zero had essentially no personnel with the strategic knowledge they needed or the ability to operate their weapons. One Kamajor described the situation when he said, 'We didn't use guns during our training exercises in Talia, we used sticks. It was not something you could call military training'.¹⁸⁰

The Kamajors from around the country considered Hinga Norman at Base Zero to be their leader, and they looked to him for orders. After Norman's arrival at Base Zero, many influential people

began travelling around the Mende land on motorcycles, calling for people to cooperate with the Kamajors at Base Zero. Those individuals included Alhaji Daramy Rogers, a member of parliament under the Kabbah administration, a man named George Jambawai (details regarding him are unknown) and Albert Nallo, who was a trader and had connections in different areas around the country through his business network. Kamajors groups in various regions responded to the request for cooperation and sent liaisons to Base Zero. The Sierra Leone Special Court heard the following statement from a Kamajor.

I told you yesterday that every base, every group [equivalent to what this book called the ‘Kamajors groups’] has a commander. And all these commanders were coming to Base Zero to take instruction from the High Command or the National Coordinator. So when they came, whatever instruction they were given, they have to take back to their fighting groups in their various locations. (SCSL 17 November 2004: 11)

Photograph 9-2: The school grounds that were used as a helicopter landing pad



(Talía, 2009. Photograph by author)

Kamajors who served as liaisons would exchange information by travelling back and forth between their own chiefdoms and Base Zero by motorcycle.

Base Zero offered support to the Kamajor groups that came under their influence. Naturally, this was a redistribution of the materiel being provided the Kamajors by ECOMOG. Material supplies were transported directly to Base Zero by helicopter from ECOMOG's Nigerian battalion headquarters (at Ricks Institute) in Monrovia. The grounds of an elementary school were used as a helicopter landing pad (see Photograph 9-2). In charge of logistical management was Mustapha Lumeh, who had been brought into the organisation from the underground organisation in Liberia. According to statements made before the Sierra Leone Special Court, 'Mustapha Lumeh had something to do with the food that was brought by the aircraft' (SCSL 17 February 2006); 'The man who was in charge of logistics, to assist me in that direction, was one Mustapha Lumeh' (SCSL 5 October 2006). Lumeh had gone to Base Zero alongside Norman. Lumeh had managed an NGO, so would likely have had the skills required to be a talent supply officer. Now, Base Zero was located in a very inaccessible area, so there were few people capable of reading and writing. Supplies brought to the town of Talia by helicopter were stored at the assembly hall. There were also storehouses for provisions and for arms and ammunition there. The deputy director of war, an individual named Mohammed Musa Orinco, was in charge of managing the weapons and ammunition warehouse (SCSL 16 November 2004: 70). Jaiah Kamara, one of those who had been dispatched to Gendema, was in charge of managing the provisions storehouse (SCSL 16 February 2006:¹⁸¹). His responsibilities in Talia were the same as the responsibilities he had in Gendema.

It was upon this administrative foundation that supplies could be provided by Base Zero in Talia to the various Kamajor groups scattered throughout Sierra Leone. Those other Kamajor groups dispatched personnel to Base Zero, and those personnel would travel there by foot, and carry the supplies back with them. It was in this way that Base Zero was able to bring those Kamajor groups together

and unite with them, keeping them in the client position of their patron–client relationship (cf. Hoffman 2011a: 136).

Among the Kamajor groups that had received support, those individuals who had managed to gain control over supplies and materials came to gain power themselves. The reason for this is that those individuals who had control over the supplies were then able to further distribute them to others as patrons themselves. For example, the Kamajors in the town of Panguma (in Kenema District) were under the control of a young man by the name of Musa Junisa. His rise to the position of leader could be described as being thanks to Junisa having received the support of Norman. At the time of the May 25 Coup, Panguma had a shortage of heavy weaponry. So, Junisa and a few other Kamajors travelled to Gendema and they received a dozen self-propelled rocket launchers. They later visited Base Zero and acquired G3 battle rifles, AK47s and other weapons, and the magazine for each weapon type. Junisa utilised that cache of arms to build up his own network of clients, and to solidify his position as patron/leader (Hoffman 2011a: 136).

The Organisational Structure of Base Zero

Let us now take a closer look at how the internal structure of the Kamajor groups at Base Zero was organised. To put it bluntly, there was no organisational structure in place at Base Zero and, for that reason, the base was often in a state of chaos. In truth, when the decision-making apparatus at Base Zero was investigated during the hearings held at the Sierra Leone Special Court, the issue became a point of contention. There were many human rights violations observed during the activities of the Base Zero Kamajors. Decisions at Base Zero were made by three individuals: Samuel Hinga Norman, Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana. These three men were all indicted on charges before the Sierra Leone Special Court. Of the three, Norman is said to have been the most powerful in terms of his right to make decisions.

After Norman's arrival in Talia, Allieu Kondewa came to be known as the High Priest of the Kamajors. Norman had faith in Kondewa in his position as initiator, and Kondewa became one of Norman's confidants. In addition, once Moinina Fofana returned

from Gendema, he came to have a powerful influence on the Kamajors. Fofana was named the director of war and he was responsible for receiving reports from liaisons from around the country on military operations being conducted, and provided the groups with the necessary logistical support, supplying a variety of provisions including ammunition. He was also apparently in command of his own independent unit, which he could use as he wished.

In addition to the three men mentioned above, some front-line commanders were also involved in the decision making at Base Zero. One paramount chief who had stayed at Base Zero described the situation when he was called to appear before the Sierra Leone Special Court.

He [Norman] would say this meeting is purely for commanders [...] the very director of war [...] Mr Moinina Fofana ... Then Mr Allieu Kondewa the high priest. One fellow called Bobor Tucker, Jim Bayama [...] We would say formally after we had written our – we had done the write out, we presented it to him. That he called the high priests, the national director of war Mr Moinina Fofana, some key commanders [...] We are asked to read and explain the very things we have written and we did that. We had Mr Hashim Kallon, who is really fluent in explaining things in our local language. I was doing the reading and he was explaining for our people who were illiterate to understand what we meant. That was one of the key meetings. [...] They withdrew and after a few minutes they came back and said they started that war without even writing down paper, they did not have a sheet of paper. (SCSL 17 February 2005: 102–104. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

It was in this way that decisions were made at Base Zero – with those at the top arbitrarily passing down their orders. Even internally, there were those who saw issues with decisions being made in that way.

It is also difficult to say that there was any sort of chain of command through which decisions made were communicated to those in lower positions within the group. The paramount chief who

made the previous statement also described the chain of command as follows.

I saw that the whole organisation (at Base Zero) had an ineffective command and control [...] I looked at the situation fearing – we had a lot of – everybody was commander, everybody was commander. Even the initiators served as commanders [...] Also I saw – here was a man called the director of war who was effective – he was more concerned with the receiving of the logistics and distributing the logistics and I did not ever see a time when he came and really put in place, let's say, this is a deployment area, this is a number of manpower at that area. There was no proper nominal role. I could not see that also. [...] Every commander would just say, 'Well, can we have – to be deployed in that area'. And, you know, something like that. So almost anyone who could command up to ten or 15 men will just think of an area, say, 'Okay, we are going to deploy there'. The way I saw them, they (high priest Allieu Kondewa and national director of war Moinina Fofana) did not want people who were literate. I mean, let me say, the way the western literacy, I mean, because they have some Islamic scribes they have with them. Those are the only people they consider, but we who are able to write in English, they did not want that much [...] For example, the very director of war was not comfortable with that situation, let alone the high priest, because his own position was that he has a problem as an illiterate – whatever they told him, he had no other way because he was and illiterate [...] What they told us that when we began fighting they did not have books, they were just organising their men. Then they went to wherever they wanted to attack and we will come and say everything on paper, 'War is not on paper, but the use of weapons and attacking the enemies'. No planning. (SCSL 17 February 2005: 90–94. Excerpts arranged by author)

It is possible that the reason there was no proper chain of command in place at Base Zero was because of the lessons Norman learned while he was at Gendema. When he was a part of the Gendema Kamajor group, Norman was unable to exercise his own command in an arbitrary way. Because there was a set hierarchical chain of command in place at Gendema, there was no way through

which he could arbitrarily have specific units operate as he wished. In contrast, there was no chain of command in place at Base Zero. That was why he could select whatever unit was convenient and have them operate in a way that was in line with his own wishes.

Norman utilised that situation to his advantage and was able to use the Kamajors to achieve his own objectives (Hoffman 2004b). For example, the Base Zero Kamajors often engaged in attacks on a place called Koribondo. Koribondo is located in Jaiaama Bongor chiefdom – the chiefdom where Norman served as regent chief. Norman had a poor relationship with the elders of Koribondo. Jaiaama Bongor Chiefdom was a new chiefdom created through amalgamation of two chiefdoms; Bongor Chiefdom and Jaiaama Chiefdom. It was created during the time of Norman's predecessor, B.A. Foday Kai (1910-1989) from Bongor Chiefdom. Koribondo is located in what was once Bongor Chiefdom, while the village of Telu is located in what was once Jaiaama Chiefdom. When the new Jaiaama Bongor Chiefdom was formed, Telu was designated the centre of the chiefdom, and this was meant to be a temporary measure. However, once Norman rose to the position of regent chief in 1993, Telu continued in its position as centre of the chiefdom. It is said that this provoked the anger of the elders of Koribondo. For his part, Norman made use of the Kamajors to suppress their opposition (Hoffman 2007b: 648; SCSL 30 January 2006).

Confusion often reigned strong at Base Zero due to the inadequacy of the chain of command and the arbitrary utilisation of units stationed there. Norman named Albert Nallo to the posts of deputy director of operations and director of operations for the southern province, and when Nallo testified before the Sierra Leone Special Court, he provided a number of examples that illustrated the chaos that arose among the Kamajors at Base Zero from the lack of a hierarchical command structure. The following excerpts from his testimony serve as examples of that chaos.

When we [Nallo and others] went to the district office we told him [a commander] about our mission that we've come to cool down the incidents that were happening in the Bumpé Chiefdom and the Shenge Chiefdom wherein the Kamajors were looting and burning houses and

killing people. We were able to cool down the situation but the district officer said that he will not involve himself – he will not involve himself because that these people have killed a women and brought her to Moyamba and she got brought there and they had to bury her. Then they took one four year baby and put him in fire and he burnt there. When they apprehended them and put them in jail they said Chief Sam Hinga Norman came in a helicopter and came down to Moyamba and threatened them and they released the people. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 63–64. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

Joe Nunie. General Joe Nunie. He was not a real general. General to do bad. Joe Nunie used to extort people for money in Kpetewoma, a town in Bo District. He went to the farm houses and then take chickens, poultry, people's poultry. They were business people. He would meet them, attack them and then take away their money. That was how he operated. I called him and said, 'Joe Nunie, Lugbu is my home town'. I did not call him General. I did not call him General. I said, 'Kpetewoma Lugbu is my home. This is the place I was born. The people here are my people. You know that I'm your leader here as director of operations. You have been here. You are doing a lot of bad to the people here. You have no good record'. So I held him and tied him. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 68–69. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

We can see from these statements that Base Zero did not have an adequate strategic apparatus in place to allow it to coordinate with other Kamajor groups.

In addition, a part of Base Zero's activities included the meting out of punishment against those it deemed rebel 'collaborators'. When it received reports of citizens cooperating with the rebels, the Kamajors/CDF forces would apparently then engage in the 'disposal' of such 'collaborators'. Nallo provided testimony that illustrated his involvement in several such incidents when he appeared before the Sierra Leone Special Court.

I went to Dodo village in Jong Chiefdom, Bonthe District. I went to the village with two other people given to me by Moinina Fofana to

give me an idea what the terrain is in the area [...] When we reached the village the people had all gone in hiding. We call them out that Chief Norman had sent us to come and stay there to safeguard the people, to protect the people, and nothing would happen to them. [...] When they came out of the bush we summoned them in the court barri and we told them that, 'We've come. You are all rebels, that we've got an information, and the National Coordinator [Norman] had sent us to come and weed out'. Momoh Pemba, Billo Conte and myself and the others who were in the group, we opened fire on them. We killed over 15 of them. We burnt down their houses. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 45–46. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

Brima Tolli, he has a house at Shenge (Kogboro Chiefdom, Moyamba District). Chief Norman said that he too was a collaborator because that was the place where the juntas used to keep time and ate there. We were to burn his house, loot his property there. And if seen he should be killed also [...] (SCSL 10 March 2005: 75–76. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

In Sorgia village (Lower Banta Chiefdom. Moyamba District), we went with Kamoh Lahai Bangura (an initiator), who was high priest, who was sacked by Chief Hinga Norman, high priest Dr. Allieu Kondewa, because of what he did in Charles Margai's village, the havoc that he reaped in Charles Margai's village [...] When myself and Kamoh Lahai Bangura went and he pointed at Joseph Lansana, he said, 'This was the man that was working for the rebels, that he was secretary for the rebels and he's RUF'. [...] He was tortured before we tied him up. We cut off his ear, lit a plastic and we were dripping it on his body [...] An old, frail looking old woman was screaming and she said the man was her son and they said she was cooking for the juntas [...] and the woman, the old woman was chopped [...] We took petrol along, about two gallons, and set ablaze their compound. We took the old woman and threw into the fire. That's where she died. At that time we have tied Joseph Lansana and he was lying down. And he was pleading that, 'Please, don't kill me. You've burnt my house, you've killed my mother'. So he said Kamoh Lahai Bangura should think about the relationship that they've had before. So now that we've killed the mother we should

let go of him. So at the moment Joseph Lansana is in the village as I'm speaking. (SCSL 10 March 2005: 47–50. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

It was in this way that the Kamajors/CDF dealt with people thought to be connected in some way to the junta or the rebels. Information on these so-called 'collaborators' was brought to Base Zero by the liaisons dispatched by the various groups of Kamajors around the country. However, there was no way to confirm the true motives of those bringing that information. It is likely that more than a few of those reports were simply lies designed to remove individuals deemed inconvenient. The CDF became increasingly suspicious of the existence of internal enemies, which is one explanation for the increased cruelty of their actions.

After witnessing the arbitrarily implemented military operations of the Kamajors and their unmethodical decision making, the paramount chiefs, elders and intellectuals who up to that point had remained bystanders began to seek out ways to improve the situation. As a result, they proposed the establishment of a 'War Council' (TRC 3A 2004: 278). One of the paramount chiefs involved in presenting the proposal spoke about it as follows;

We who had gone there [Base Zero] with paper [are] the few amongst the group that were able to read and write, including my own name [...] honourable paramount chief Charles Corker, Hashim Kallon, Alhaji Daramy Rogers [a member of parliament], [and] paramount chief J William Quee. [...] Honourable Charles Corker said, 'I have been in administration, and then when we look at a situation where you have men put together with weapons, if they are not properly organised, put under effective command and control, with codes and some morals and values, he would end up having them turning the very weapons against you yourself that are in control' [...] We [the literate members] [...] presented them [proposals] to chief and he [Norman] said, 'Then let us have what we call a War Council'. [...] we would want to have the thing – a committee that really see to it that there is proper command and control and some other means of controlling the men, that they are not to go at random operations when

they so wished. [...] We made sure that [...] every region in this country was represented [...] You have Chief William Quee, our chairman. We had Alhaji Daramy Rogers, the vice chairman.[...] Mr. M S Dumbuya, represented the north, [...] Honourable Mr Tejan Sankoh, representing the south, [...] Honourable paramount chief Charles Corker also of the south. [...] The man [inaudible] of logistics [...] Mr. Francis Lumeh [Mustapha Lumeh] [...] ¹⁸² (SCSL 17 February 2005: 94–98¹⁸³ 181. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

It was in this way that the War Council was established, but in fact, it played only a nominal role, and in practice, it apparently did not function. Decisions continued to be passed down by Norman, Kondewa and the others in similar positions. Testimony made at the Sierra Leone Special Court also claimed that the members of the War Council proposed some plans for structural reformation, but Chief Norman had no interest in having an effective structure put in place. Even though the War Council was in place, meetings were only for commanders and the others were considered ‘side-liners’ in the meetings (SCSL 17 February 2005: 99–101). Albert Nallo, who was named deputy director of operations and director of operations for the southern province by Norman, gave testimony at the Sierra Leone Special Court, stating that the War Council ‘did not have that power at all. Everything was directed from Hinga Norman’. According to Nallo, the War Council’s role was to provide recommendations to Chief Hinga Norman (SCSL 10 March 2005: 42).

3. The Kamajors/ECOMOG Offensive and the Restoration of the Kabbah Administration

Operation Black December

In November 1997, ECOMOG utilised Kamajors/CDF forces to launch their first genuine military operation aimed at restoring the Kabbah administration to power. The first stage of the strategic plan was called ‘Operation Black December’. The operation continued from November to the following January. Before the military operation began, ECOMOG engaged in elaborate meetings in

Conakry with President Kabbah's Government in Exile and with the Kamajors/CDF. Participants included President Kabbah, several ministers from President Kabbah's cabinet, the Sierra Leonean Ambassador to Guinea and the commanders of ECOMOG forces stationed at Lungi International Airport (ECOMOG forces occupied Lungi International Airport to protect it against the AFRC/RUF). Norman travelled to the meetings by helicopter from his headquarters at Base Zero.

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the objective of Operation Black December was to cut off the supply routes being used by the AFRC/RUF (TRC 3A 2004: 283–284). As previously mentioned, the AFRC/RUF only occupied urban centres and their area of effective control was limited to those urban areas. Soldiers stationed in different areas were dependent on convoys of supplies sent from Freetown. Operation Black December aimed to cut them off from that supply chain.

Norman announced the implementation of Operation Black December on a BBC radio news programme. As stated before the Sierra Leone Special Court, 'No vehicle should ply the major roads. Anybody who did that – if you were a civilian, after we've blocked the road and you said you will neglect this you will be putting your life in danger' (SCSL 10 March 2005).

It was not only the Kamajors at Base Zero that took part in Operation Black December; other Kamajor groups were also involved. Orders on how the operation was to be implemented were passed on to each Kamajor group by the liaisons assigned to Base Zero (SCSL 10 March 2005). In addition, each Kamajor group acknowledged that they had received their orders by making statements over the air through radio stations. Radio broadcasts were also used to pass the plan on to other combatants within each territory.

One Kamajor combatant based out of Base Zero provided the following statement regarding his experience during Operation Black December.

We set up an ambush on the Bo-Freetown Highway and attacked army vehicles. That made it so the army couldn't send supplies from

Freetown to Bo. If they couldn't transport provisions to Bo, they couldn't supply areas even farther out. However, after around two weeks, we ran out of food and ammunition, so we had to go back to Base Zero again. After that, little by little, we did more attacks. ECOMOG didn't take part in those attacks. This operation was done by the Kamajors only.¹⁸²

According to this statement, the operation was conducted by the Kamajors and the CDF, and ECOMOG did not get involved in the actual fighting. A civilian gave the following testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission about being caught up in Operation Black December:

On 2 November 1997 I was travelling from Kenema to Bo in a Government bus [...] I was in the bus with other passengers whom I didn't know, including about thirty pilgrims, both male and female. On the journey, we did not know that the Kamajors had set a one-mile ambush.

When we reached Gembeh at 10.00 a.m. an RPG was launched on the edge of the bus and cut off the driver's head; he died on the spot. The bus was then moving uncontrolled and finally [was] blocked by a big tree [...]

The Kamajors then came in their hundreds and surrounded the bus and asked everybody to come down, including me. The Kamajors took us to the bridge and their commander, whom I know facially, took out a Motorola [mobile phone] handset and communicated to Hinga Norman, who was in Monghere at that moment. According to their conversation, I understood that Hinga Norman gave them the order to execute everybody [...]

By the other side of the bridge there was a big pit; the commander told all the men to stand in one line and the women in another line. Four of the Kamajors stood in front of the rows and began to slaughter the people with their swords and daggers and dump them into the pit [...]

I was the last person in the men's row. As they were about to kill me, I used mystical power and disappeared. (TRC 3A 2004: 284)

Putting aside the authenticity of the use of magical powers, the statement does provide some insight into how Operation Black December was conducted. The operation continued until January 2018. Over the course of the operation, a massive amount of looting took place. This was apparently particularly true at agricultural facilities, where large amounts of harvested crops were stolen. One Kamajor combatant who participated in Operation Black December stated that the looting was meant to supply the operation itself, not simply to acquire provisions (TRC 3A 2004: 284).

The Liberation of Freetown by ECOMOG Forces

After the completion of Operation Black December, the next stage of the strategy was implemented: Operation Sandstorm (TRC 3A 2004: 290). Operation Sandstorm was not only conducted by the Kamajors/CDF; ECOMOG's armed forces were also mobilised for it. The operation was two-pronged, with one focused on the city of Freetown and the other aimed at the hinterland. The strategy had ECOMOG forces aiming to take Freetown back from the AFRC/RUF, while the Kamajors/CDF (with the support of ECOMOG units) would all mobilise in unison to take numerous different towns, before beginning an advance on Freetown (TRC 3A 2004: 290).

Using a map containing the positions of various areas around Freetown, we can trace out just how ECOMOC managed to bring those areas under its control. The capture of Freetown was the goal of the first phase of Operation Sandstorm, and this phase was known by the name Operation Tigerhead.

The majority of those who took part in the operation to regain Freetown were soldiers from the Nigerian battalion attached to ECOMOG forces. There were very few Sierra Leoneans who participated (i.e. there were no Kamajors or CDF combatants). Figure 9-1 presents a map of the areas surrounding Freetown. The Freetown urban area is located at the tip of the peninsula. On the other side of the bay from Freetown's urban area is the location of Lungi International Airport. Lungi International Airport was under the control of ECOMOG forces throughout the period the AFRC was in power and it served as a refuge for police officers and soldiers

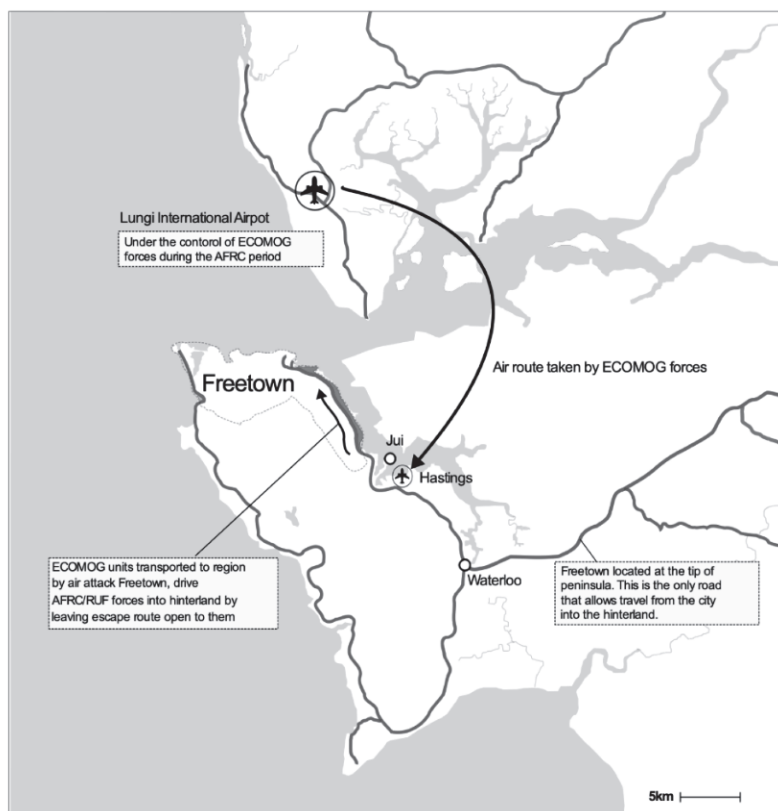
in the SLA who opposed the AFRC government. The only citizens of Sierra Leone who took part in the operation to recapture Freetown were part of a contingent of 172 ex-policemen and other such individuals, all of whom fought under the direction of ECOMOG. M.S. Dumbuya is said to have conducted military training for those combatants (This fact also suggests that Norman, Dumbuya and other figures connected to President Kabbah's Government in Exile were frequently on the move).

On 2 February 1998, ECOMOG launched the operation. ECOMOG units were airlifted from Lungi International Airport to the town of Hastings, which lies on the outskirts of Freetown. Hastings had a small airfield at which helicopters were able to take off and land. After disembarking from their transportation, the ECOMOG forces began to advance on Freetown. At first, AFRC/RUF forces put up a strong resistance, but ECOMOG managed to capture most of the main strategic areas of the city between 12 and 13 February. The AFRC and RUF forces were routed, and they escaped into the hinterland (TRC 3A 2004: 291). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard from one former AFRC combatant who spoke about the operation.

When ECOMOG came, they toppled us in a short time – they used jets, they used artilleries, armoured cars, tanks, everything. At that time the AFRC did not have those weapons, so for the sake of the civilians we decided to pull out. (TRC 3A 2004: 292)

I also spoke to a former AFRC combatant about his experiences during that period. He was one of those stationed in Freetown and sent out to resist the ECOMOG advance into the city. However, he said that during the fighting, he realised that their situation had worsened and he fled, leaving his belongings behind. He told his unit that he would 'be back in a bit', then changed his clothes and secretly fled Freetown.

Figure 9-1: Freetown and its surrounding areas



(Note: Map drawn by author based on information obtained from Google Maps)

ECOMOG's aim was not to completely annihilate the AFRC/RUF – their objective was simply to drive them from the areas within and around the city. As a peacekeeping force, ECOMOG wanted to minimise casualties among the civilian population in Freetown and its surrounding areas (TRC 3A 2004: 292). That is why they left open the route they had taken while advancing into the city – i.e. the road that led back to Hastings from Freetown – to provide a means of escape for AFRC/RUF forces. Backtracking along the route that ECOMOG had taken to get to Freetown would allow them to flee into the Sierra Leone hinterland (see Figure 9-1). That is in fact what AFRC/RUF combatants did;

they travelled along that route and managed to escape into the hinterland accompanied by their families and followers.

The Kamajors Take up Arms in the Hinterland

At the same time as ECOMOG was taking control of Freetown, the Kamajors/CDF were taking up their own arms in the hinterland. Both the Base Zero Kamajors and the Kamajors at Gendema participated in this phase of the operation. In fact, it was from those two groups of Kamajors that the strategy was first implemented. The two groups spent a few weeks in February advancing on and capturing towns (Bo, Kenema, Moyamba, Koribondo and others) that were located on the roads to Freetown. One Kamajor who had been at Base Zero described it.

When Freetown was captured, we all rose at once to capture the other towns. Doing it that way meant that no one would be able to get reinforcements from anywhere else. We also blockaded the trunk roads. We attacked Bo, Koribondo, Kenema and the other towns at the same time. I took part in the attack on Bo. We kept the pressure on them for three days and three nights. Then we were finally able to capture Bo.¹⁸³

One citizen of Bo spoke before the Sierra Leone Special Court to describe the situation in the town between the time Freetown fell to ECOMOG and the arrival of the Kamajors/CDF force.

We were in Bo when we heard that ECOMOG had come and captured Freetown. At that time, the junta forces were in Bo; they were all over the town. But fear had gripped the town because, when they were in Freetown here – because they were dislodged from Freetown, they pretended as if they had left the town, that is, Bo Town. But people who were in the neighbouring areas, that is reservation, which was their headquarters, people who were in the neighbourhood raised the alarm, saying that these guys had left. But people still didn't believe. But if you could go through the rest of the town, we all believed then that they had gone, indeed. At that time, the people, including youths, came down to the streets and started tracing those who were collaborating

with the juntas. Whosoever they saw, they would kill, and they would burn that person's house [...]

I know people who were junta collaborators, whose houses were burnt. One of them was Alie Fataba, whose house was located along Jerry Road, but World Vision was using that house as an office. But when that thing happened, since the youths were in control of the town at that time, right to that time, they went to the place and looted all of World Vision's property, took it out of the office and set the house on fire [...]

The Kamajors had to come to the town (later on). For the rest of the day, on Friday, the town was in the hands of the youths. Saturday, it continued like that. Sunday, in the morning, the Kamajors came to Bo. When they came, the burning stopped. Everybody received them joyously. The people were dancing for the rest of that day. The dancing went on for the rest of the day and it continued on Monday. Everybody was happy, dancing. And, on Tuesday morning, the junta forces regrouped. We just heard bombardment from the New London area, and we saw crowds of people coming; everybody was running. (SCSL 27 September 2006: 6–9. Excerpts arranged by author for readability)

This statement shows us how the junta temporarily abandoned Bo after Freetown was taken by ECOMOG. Next, the Kamajors/CDF entered Bo and captured it momentarily, but soon after, a battle erupted between the Kamajors/CDF and junta forces stationed around Bo.¹⁸⁴

I heard from a number of former Kamajor combatants that the first group to arrive in Bo were the Kamajors from Base Zero. Apparently, however, the Base Zero Kamajors didn't have the strength to keep the town under their own control alone and it wasn't until the Gendema Kamajors arrived that they were finally able to capture Bo. I spoke to one of Gendema Kamajor leaders, Ibrahim Tucker about this.

The Base Zero Kamajors were struggling to capture Bo and the town was finally freed after our units arrived. That shows just how superior we were when compared to the Kamajors at Base Zero. They weren't properly organised, but we were organised and we could

operate properly by coordinating with each other. If we hadn't been there, Bo would not have been freed.¹⁸⁵

The Gendema Kamajors successfully won control over Zimmi and started to push their way further into the hinterland. Their arrival in Bo was after their capture of Zimmi. The *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report discusses the capture of Zimmi in more detail.

The final battle in Zimmi, which took place on 17 February, saw the Kamajors being assisted by ECOMOG forces and some SLA forces. Those combined forces blocked all the roads leading to the town and battled for three days with the RUF/AFRC forces who had not fled the town, which some had on hearing that Freetown was no longer under their control. Over 1,500 civilians used by the RUF/AFRC forces as sex slaves or as workers to do petty jobs like brushing the town, bringing food or water were freed by the Kamajors, who then made Zimmi their base ¹⁸⁶ ... After the ECOMOG intervention in Freetown in February 1998, the District rapidly became free of RUF and AFRC forces as the Kamajors took control of it. (Smith et al. 2004: 508)

As this account describes, the Gendema Kamajors had the support of ECOMOG forces. The Gendema Kamajors went through Zimmi and on to Kenema and Bo, where they joined up with the Kamajors from Base Zero. They operated with the backing of ECOMOG units that had come from Liberia and then attacked Zimmi. After its capture, they set their sights on Kenema, Bo and other towns.

Ibrahim Tucker explained how ECOMOG supported the forces of the Gendema Kamajors. Tucker was commander of the second battalion at the time, and he described how the Gendema Kamajors would capture a town and ECOMOG would enter afterwards. For example, the Kamajors captured Zimmi and then ECOMOG arrived. Next, they captured Joru and ECOMOG forces again followed them into the town afterwards. Tucker emphasised that the Kamajors/CDF were able to take their strategic targets through their own strength alone.¹⁸⁷ As for ECOMOG, they set up logistical

support hubs to supply the Gendema Kamajor units and, at the same time, stationed its own forces in newly captured cities and towns to ensure that those areas would remain out of the hands of the AFRC and RUF.¹⁸⁸

Tucker spoke about the situation the Gendema Kamajors found themselves in as they aimed for Bo and Kenema after capturing Zimmi.

We advanced from Gendema towards Kenema and Bo. Unlike Base Zero, we had a rigid organisational structure. I led them as commander of the second battalion, and the CDF Special Forces also took part. The BBC reported on the fact that the CDF and junta forces had found themselves in a stalemate in Bo. The guys from Base Zero were not organised well, and they weren't able to capture Bo. We came to their assistance in Bo along with the ECOMOG units. We left some of our men under their command, and then I went with the rest with ECOMOG to Kailahun District (which was an RUF stronghold). We passed through Segbema on our way to Daru. ECOMOG remained behind in Daru and didn't advance forward from there. We left ECOMOG there in Daru and kept advancing, capturing Kailahun (the town) and Koindu (a town on the border with Liberia) one after the other. We gathered up the inhabitants of each town and searched for enemies.¹⁸⁹

The Kamajors/CDF was able to penetrate the RUF stronghold of Kailahun District and take the town of Koindu on the Liberian border. However, within only a few days, their forces were driven back towards Daru.

Tucker's statement about searching the towns for enemies has been corroborated by statements made by a former AFRC combatant. The quote below was provided by the same former AFRC combatant who had escaped Freetown when it was under attack by ECOMOG by telling his unit that he would be 'back in a bit' before leaving the city. This combatant was a Liberian who threw away everything in his attempt to escape to Liberia. He managed to make it all the way from Freetown to the town of Kailahun on the bus. The Kamajors/CDF arrived while he was staying in Kailahun. He spoke

of his own experience regarding the ‘junta/rebel hunting’ on the part of the Kamajors.

I stayed in the town of Kailahun as a refugee. Refugees gathered on the grounds of a school. The Kamajors came to the school where we were. They started a spooky chant of, ‘Hooh! Hooh!’. They came to the school grounds and hunted for rebels there. Some people cooperated and would point to people and say stuff like, ‘This guy is SLA. This guy is RUF’. I was really scared because there were many people I knew in the crowd of people at the school. They all knew what I had done. But I wasn’t discovered and I was able to stay.¹⁹⁰

The Kamajor/CDF units mobilised the local inhabitants of the towns they entered as they searched for any rebels who might be hiding among them. The towns and villages of Sierra Leone are quite small, so people know the faces of others who live there. If any rebels were to try to hide among the locals, they would stand out. So, the Kamajors/CDF recruited the locals in their search for any rebels in their midst.

The Change in Kamajor Unit Composition from the Perspective of the CDF Special Forces

The two groups of Kamajors (those from Base Zero and those from Gendema) mobilised simultaneously to bring town after town under their control. Other groups of Kamajors joined the groups as they moved and participated in the advance. The advancing Kamajors absorbed other acquaintances into their units and merged with other units during their advance. It can be illustrated as transformation of the PC network by utilising the rhizome network of personal connections.

The CDF Special Forces and its Liberian combatants were no exception to this. Many of the members of that unit were Sierra Leoneans who had fighting experience in Liberia. They used their connections with acquaintances to bring even more Kamajors in as new members of the CDF Special Forces. One Kamajor who joined the CDF Special Forces at the time spoke to me about the situation.

I [fought in another group of Kamajors but] joined the Special Forces. If I wanted to protect myself, it would be best for me to join the unit that was the strongest. I thought that being in the Special Forces would be better than being in the other Kamajor groups. When I joined the Special Forces, I went with them to Kailahun District. The majority of the members of the Special Forces were Liberians. For the people of Kailahun District, being Liberian meant being a rebel [When the RUF first appeared in 1991, they asked the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia for personnel to help them]. I was with the Special Forces, and I explained our mission to the local people, and promised them that we wouldn't be attacking them at night or loot things from them.¹⁹¹

The Kamajor who told me this story once lived in Liberia. He was combatant in Liberia as well. Therefore, he found an acquaintance from the Liberian combatants in the CDF Special Forces. That relationship is what allowed him to join up with the CDF Special Forces. There was also a commander who was related to a combatant in the Special Forces who brought along some of his subordinates when he joined up.¹⁹² These examples illustrate how the Kamajors went about switching patrons.

The Kamajors who Went to Freetown

The Kamajors recaptured city after city, making their way from across Sierra Leone to assist the ECOMOG forces assaulting Freetown. Freetown had already fallen into the hands of ECOMOG, but the remnants of the AFRC/RUF could still be found in the areas around the city. The Kamajors were mobilised to help mop up the remaining AFRC/RUF forces.

The Kamajors/CDF set up their base of operations in the outskirts of Freetown in a town called Jui. Jui was less than one kilometre away from the town of Hastings, the location of the airfield that ECOMOG had used to disembark its forces (see Figure 9-1). The Kamajor combatants were brought from various locations to Jui by helicopter. I had the chance to interview some of the Kamajors who had been taken to Jui by helicopter. The statement below was made by a Kamajors from Base Zero.

On a day in 1998, all of us were ordered to take up arms. Our unit travelled through the bush to Daru. From Daru, we were taken to Jui by helicopter.¹⁹³

I also spoke to a Kamajor who had been in charge of operational management for the helicopter flights.

During the invasion in 1998, I sent personnel from different locations to the peninsula [where Freetown is located]. The Kamajors were disembarked in Newtown and other areas in the outskirts of Freetown. The helicopters travelled back and forth from Lungi [International Airport] and Hastings [small town near Freetown]. ECOMOG supplied us with fuel. After Freetown was captured, we landed at Cockerill [the headquarter of Sierra Leone Army inside Freetown]. Even after the capture of the city, we continued to transport personnel to Freetown by helicopter. It would have been dangerous to send personnel by car because of the possibility of ambush.¹⁹⁴

The helicopter was the same one used when the Kamajors were operating out of Base Zero. The helicopter continued to be used after Freetown had been captured. In addition, Kamajors continued to be brought to Freetown by car and helicopter even after the capture of the city.

In this way, ECOMOG and the Kamajors/CDF were able to bring about the recapture of Freetown. The forces of the AFRC/RUF fled into the northern areas of the country and ECOMOG and the Kamajors/CDF followed them into the northern province. Later on, the Kamajors/CDF and ECOMOG managed to bring the cities of Masiaka and Makeni and the town of Kabala under their control. However, they were unable to also capture the rural areas surroundings those cities. Just as the Kamajors had holed up in the rural villages while the AFRC administration was in power, the AFRC/RUF combatants concealed themselves in the rural regions.

The forces of ECOMOG and the Kamajors/CDF began Operation Tigertail in order to bring the north of Sierra Leone under their control. However, they saw little success as the Nigerian units of the ECOMOG forces were unfamiliar with the areas in which they

were fighting and were suffering from insufficient logistical support. In addition, the Kamajors/CDF were primarily made up of Mende combatants, who knew few people in the north of the country. M.S. Dumbuya, a member of the Limba people, had attempted to bring more personnel from ethnic groups in the north into the CDF, but he was only able to mobilise a limited number of individuals from specific communities.

* * *

In this chapter, we looked at how the Base Zero Kamajors came to take a more dominant position over the Gendema Kamajors as the groups continued to engage with the forces of the junta. We conclude with a summary of the movements of the Kamajors/CDF.

1. Samuel Hinga Norman maintained his position as overall patron of the Kamajors utilising the supplies provided by ECOMOG. He abandoned the Gendema Kamajors and moved on to take over the Kamajors at Base Zero. That action allowed the Base Zero Kamajor group to begin distributing the supplies Norman had obtained to other Kamajors groups.

2. There was no chain of command in place at Base Zero, and orders were repeatedly given in an arbitrary fashion. Decisions at Base Zero were mainly made by three individuals later prosecuted by the Sierra Leone Special Court: Samuel Hinga Norman, Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana.

3. The joint operation between ECOMOG and Kamajors/CDF forces resulted in the expulsion of the junta forces.

Looking at these events in light of the thesis of this work, we find that the Base Zero Kamajors seemed to have risen to take over as dominant PC network in place of the Gendema Kamajors.

Next, let us review the movement of the CDF Special Forces.

The CDF Special Forces brought in more combatants at the time of the advance into Freetown. The members of the CDF Special Forces were able to utilise their personal connections to achieve this.

Looking back at the structure of the CDF Special Forces during this period, we see that they made use of their rhizomatic network of personal connections to mobilise the combatants they needed. The combatants also remained on the lookout for PC networks that would bring them greater advantage. Once found, they would remove themselves from the PC network they belonged to and join the new PC network. The CDF Special Forces as a unit helps illustrate the fluid nature of PC networks.

The Establishment and Dismantling of the CDF PC Network: The Second Kabbah Administration (March 1998 to the end of the Civil War in 2002)

In the previous chapter, we discussed how a combined force comprising ECOMOG peacekeepers and Kamajors/CDF combatants successfully drove the AFRC and RUF from Freetown in February 1998. The month after Freetown was recaptured, in March 1998, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah returned to the city and was restored to his position as president of Sierra Leone. That was the beginning of the second term of the Kabbah administration. In this chapter, we will look at the movement and activities of the CDF from 10 March 1998, when President Kabbah returned, to 18 January 2002, which was the day that President Kabbah declared the civil war to have been brought to an end.

After the Kabbah administration was reinstated, the Civil Defence Forces were established as a paramilitary organisation connected to the Sierra Leonean government. Through that development, the CDF was able to cover the entire country of Sierra Leone with its PC network. The core of the network is the dependent relationships between Base Zero and other Kamajor groups. The relationships expanded to non-Mende areas in the period of the Second Kabbah Administration. In this chapter, we look at the process through which the CDF's PC network was established under Ahmad Tejan Kabbah after his return to his position as president and the process through which it was dismantled upon the conclusion of the civil war.

During this period of time, the CDF was reorganised to comprise more than only Kamajors – it also incorporated members from other vigilante groups. For that reason, from this point forward we will refer to the Civil Defence Forces not as the 'Kamajors/CDF' or 'Kamajors and the CDF' but as the CDF only.

In Section 1, we provide an overview of the return of President Kabbah and the restoration of his government. In Section 2, we discuss the restructuring of the CDF organisation during the second term of the Kabbah administration. The CDF set up a system that could be described

as bureaucratic by establishing its headquarters in Freetown and setting up offices in other cities and towns around the country. This section looks at the structure of the organisation as well as lives of CDF combatants in that period. Section 3 covers the internal power struggle within the CDF from the perspective of Sparrow's experiences. Section 4 provides more detail about the two major battles that broke out during the second term of the Kabbah administration, and looks at the activities of the CDF and the state of the PC network it had built. In Section 5, we describe the process through which the CDF was dismantled as the Sierra Leone Civil War came to an end.

1. The Restoration of the Kabbah Administration

ECOMOG forces recaptured the city of Freetown around the middle of February in 1998. A provisional government was put in place in Sierra Leone after that to ensure order would be preserved until President Kabbah was able to return. Then, on the tenth of March, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was restored to the presidency. President Kabbah had flown in to Sierra Leone from Guinea only that day. A magnificent ceremony was held at a stadium in Freetown to welcome Kabbah back to Sierra Leone and celebrate his return. The local media provided the following report about that day.

10 March: Thousands of jubilant Sierra Leoneans turned out at Lungi International Airport Tuesday morning to celebrate President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's return to Sierra Leone. 'We are going to make this a new beginning for Sierra Leone', Kabbah told the crowd. Muslim, Christian, and traditional leaders offered blessings for his return. Speaking in Krio, Kabbah urged national reconciliation. 'Let us unite and be honest with ourselves and our nation if we want our nation Sierra Leone to progress', he said. In Freetown, residents began lining the streets at dawn to catch a glimpse of the president's motorcade as it made its way to a welcoming ceremony at the national stadium. Flags, bunting, and banners decorated the city. Thousands of residents cheered and waved flags as traditional drummers and dancers performed at packed 40,000 seat stadium. Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha, Malian President Alpha Oumar Konare, Guinean President

Lansana Conte, and Nigerien President Ibrahim Bare Mainassara joined Kabbah in the celebrations. The Organisation of African Unity was represented by Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, the United Nations by Special Envoy for Sierra Leone Francis Okelo and Assistant Secretary General for Africa Ibrahim Fall, ECOWAS by Executive Secretary Lansana Kouyate, and Liberia by Acting Speaker of the House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Patrick Williams. Outside the stadium, ECOMOG troops with tanks and armoured personnel carriers stood guard, insuring tight security for the homecoming. After the welcoming ceremony ended, around 5:00 p.m., the heads of state left for a summit meeting at Cape Sierra.¹⁹⁵

With the welcoming ceremony complete, Kabbah was restored to his post as president of Sierra Leone.

At this point, the Kabbah administration could be described as having retaken Freetown, but the AFRC/RUF were still in hiding in the rural areas of the country. As the majority of Sierra Leone's armed forces ran away as soldiers of the AFRC, Kabbah's government did not in fact have any military forces that could be called a 'national army'. That is why the Kabbah administration was forced to rely upon the support of ECOMOG and the CDF. The goal was to rebuild the national army at the heart of the country, while ECOMOG and CDF forces worked in the rural areas, mopping up the remnants of the AFRC/RUF forces. The CDF later worked alongside the ECOMOG forces and the newly formed SLA to develop the strategy to use against the remaining AFRC/RUF combatants.

In April, President Kabbah made an important decision about the CDF. That decision was to place the CDF under and within the command structure of ECOMOG forces (Smith et al. 2004: 54). Kabbah's newly appointed Chief of Defence Staff of Sierra Leone, Maxwell Mitikishe Khobe, was made mediator between ECOMOG and the CDF. Khobe was originally a member of the Nigerian Army, and during the period the AFRC was in control of Sierra Leone, Khobe served as Commander of the ECOMOG Peacekeeping Force, Sierra Leone from his headquarters at Lungi International Airport. Operation Black December and the subsequent operational strategies

that brought about the recapture of Freetown were conducted under Khobe's command. Khobe was contracted to serve as the Sierra Leone Chief of Defence Staff for the following two years starting in April. He served concurrently as commander of ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone and as Chief of Defence Staff for the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, thereby becoming responsible for the military strength of the Kabbah administration.¹⁹⁶

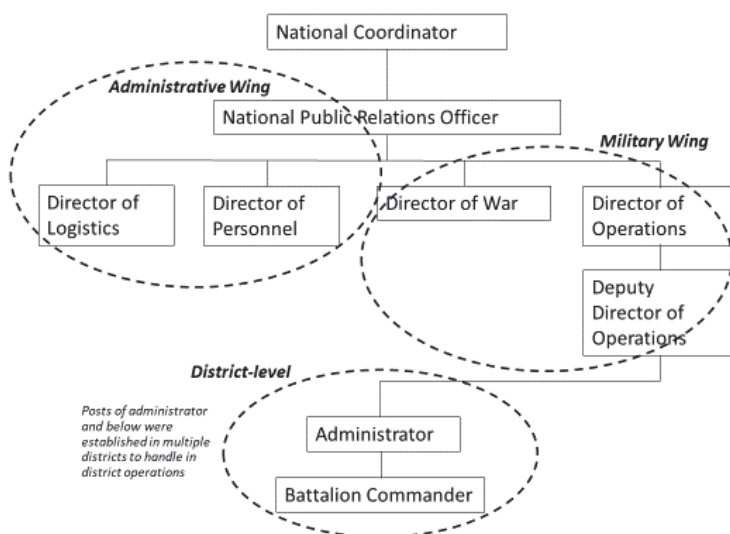
2. Organising the CDF

The CDF had organised itself into a paramilitary force that backed the government in its fight against the AFRC/RUF. Deputy Minister of Defence, Samuel Hinga Norman, took on the position of National Coordinator of the CDF and established the structure of the organisation under his command. This section provides an outline of how that structure was laid out.

The Organisational Structure of the CDF according to the Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone Report

The *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report provides an outline of the organisational structure of the Civil Defence Forces (Smith et al. 2004; 53-54). Figure 10-1 shows the organisation structure as described in The *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report (though the dotted circles and italic letters were added afterwards by the author). This report does not clearly identify for what period in time the description of the organisational structure is valid. My research led me to the conclusion that the structure laid out in that report described the organisation as it was during the second term of the Kabbah administration, and, it would be difficult to say that the CDF had established an organisational structure that could be illustrated in such a clearly defined chart. I asked various people about the structure of the CDF over the course of my research, but there were slight variances in the descriptions from person to person. Moreover, more powerful figures were not limited to the job descriptions their positions implied – they exerted their influence in various ways. In other words, the CDF organisational chart seen here can be seen as no more than an approximation of the structure actually in place.

Figure 10-1:
The CDF Organisation structure as presented in the *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report



(Note: Diagram adapted by author from information included in Smith et al. 2004: 53–54)

I spoke to numerous Kamajors about how the structure of the CDF was organised. As a result, I was able to gain a rough understanding of the CDF's organisational structure as a whole. In this section, we will utilise Figure 10-1 as a launching point for our gaining a better understanding of the CDF organisation structure. Because there was no clearly laid out organisational structure, both the *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report and my explanations that are included below are probably best described as being close enough to work with, but not perfectly correct.

Reorganising the Central Structure of the CDF

Let us first look at the differences between the CDF's organisation as described in the *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report and the results of my research.

As to the first difference, Figure 10-1 shows that above the director rank was another position titled national public relations officer. In my research, on the contrary, I found that the position of national public relation officer was no higher than the position of director. In other words, that post was known as director of public relations and had the same rank as other directorial positions. The reason why the position is higher than other directoral positions is because the man who held that position, Charles Moniwo, had an influence much greater than that wielded by the other directors. Therefore, it is not surprising that some people considered the position of national public relation officer to be as indicated in Figure 10-1 – at a rank higher than that of director. We will go into more detail about Charles Moniwo below.

The second difference arises from the fact that the *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report has overlooked the existence of the CDF's initiation wing. Figure 10-1 shows the CDF organisation as having been split into the administrative wing and the military wing. However, I was told about the initiation wing during interviews I conducted over the course of my research. Figure 10-1 makes no mention of any such entity that could correspond to the initiation wing. The initiation wing is covered in greater detail later in the book.

The third difference can be found in the fact that there were individuals of director rank that are not included in Figure 10-1. There were numerous other director positions set up within the organisation. Below we discuss the directors and the roles they played in both the military and the administrative wings of the CDF.

The central roles in the military wing were played by the director of war and the director of operations. Each of the directors had a subordinate in the position of deputy director. Those director and deputy director positions were filled by individuals who had served in military roles at Base Zero. Moinina Fofana was director of war – the same Moinina Fofana who was prosecuted before the Sierra Leone Special Court. Fofana was in control of the ammunition supply (General supplies were managed by Mustapha Lumeh who was in position of Director of Logistics). In addition, while it is not included in the organisational chart in Figure 10-1, there was also a position titled the deputy director of war. The deputy director of war

position was filled by Muhammed Musa Orinco, who had been in charge of the ammunition storehouse at Base Zero (SCSL 16 November 2004: 70). Orinco too was appointed to his position at Base Zero by Norman. In addition, the position of director of operations was held by Joseph Koroma, who was given that post by Norman during the Base Zero period. He was originally a member of the army, and apparently at the same time as Samuel Hinga Norman. During the second term of the Kabbah administration, military strategy is said to have been handled by these men.

Let us now take a look at the CDF's administrative wing. The administrative wing was in charge of logistical support for the CDF. Figure 10-1 only provides the names of two positions in the administrative wing – those of director of personnel and director of logistics. The positions were filled by Andrew Hardin and Mustapha Lumeh, both of whom had been brought from the underground organisation active in Liberia. These two men continued to exert a powerful influence on the organisation through their roles dealing with the management and distribution of personnel and supplies.

Another figure in the administrative wing who had a large amount of influence was Charles Moniwo, the director of public relations. Sparrow explained that the reason Moniwo had such a strong influence was due to the speed at which he worked.

Anyway, Norman put his trust in Charles Moniwo because of how quickly he worked. Moniwo was the kind of person where Norman just had to say, 'I have to meet so-and-so', and Moniwo would quickly find where the person was, go get him and bring him to Norman right away.

Just like Andrew Hardin and Mustapha Lumeh, Charles Moniwo had been brought into the CDF after having met Norman in Liberia. He had been unsuccessful in business up until that point and was unemployed at the time he joined the CDF. The three individuals in the administrative wing who exerted any influence were these three men: Andrew Hardin, Mustapha Lumeh and Charles Moniwo.

There were other directors in addition to these three men. Below is a brief explanation of each of the directorial positions in the administrative wing. The sources of information are several CDF-

related individuals, but I could not cross-check what they explained. Therefore, the description below is for reference purpose and the content has not yet been confirmed.

- Director of Personnel: Andrew Hardin

Andrew Hardin had been employed by Sparrow's father in his work as a car dealer. Hardin had been acquainted with Norman since before the civil war, because Sparrow's father and Norman had been in Liberia. He became a trusted subordinate of Norman during the underground organisation in Liberia. When Base Zero was established, he moved there along with Norman.

- Director of Logistics: Mustapha Lumeh

As Director of Logistics, Lumeh was responsible for the distribution of food and other daily necessities. These supplies were distributed to administrative offices setting up in rural areas (described later in this chapter), where junior staffs under Lumeh handled supply distribution. Lumeh met with Norman when the underground organisation was founded in Liberia. Before that, he had experience operating an Islamic NGO. He was skilled in accounting and had earned the trust of Norman before arriving at Base Zero.

- Director of Intelligence: Mustapha Sankoh

Sankoh was a native of Talia stationed at Base Zero. Sankoh was dispatched to Gendema along with Moinina Fofana and the others during the time Norman was still there. He later travelled to Base Zero. The responsibilities of the director of intelligence included the collection of information from front-line soldiers and scouts, and provision of intelligence reports to the director of war and director of operations. However, it would be difficult to say that he functioned well in his role.

- Director of Training: XXX Jawara (first name unknown)

Jawara had been a soldier in the national army at the same time as Norman and the two men had been close since their time together in the army. It is possible that he was placed in this post because he

was in Norman's favour. He trained the combatants of the CDF in guerrilla warfare tactics.

- Director of Medical Services: Mohammed Sesay

Mohammed Sesay operated a chain of pharmacies in Freetown and was also a practitioner of medicine. Sesay also offered medical services to the Kamajors free of charge. Norman brought Sesay along when the CDF began to receive the support of the government. He provided medical care to combatants from his pharmacies and set up a clinic at the Brookfields Hotel (where the CDF was stationed in Freetown) to provide medical services there. He installed a number of resident medical professionals at the clinic. Sesay practised only in Freetown and he had no personnel able to provide medical services in other areas of the country.

- Director of Transport: This position was first filled by Joseph Fefegura, but Ahmed Koroma later took over from him.

The director of transport was responsible for the transportation of supplies. Joseph Fefegura was one of Norman's cousins, and he had travelled to Liberia together with Norman. When Norman moved to Base Zero, Fefegura also left Gendema to go with him. Ahmed Koroma, on the other hand, was a politician who belonged to the Sierra Leone People's Party and had travelled to Liberia with M.S. Kallon, a member of parliament. Koroma had served as head of logistics in Liberia. Koroma was a native of Sierra Leone's eastern province. He was put in the position after arguing to Norman that he couldn't have all director positions filled by people from the southern province. With Koroma taking over the position of director, Fefeguro was made deputy director of Transport.

- Director of Public Relations: Charles Moniwo

Charles Moniwo visited Liberia often on business, and came to know Sparrow's father and Andrew Hardin. However, he was unemployed around the time of the May 25 coup. When Norman moved to Base Zero, Moniwo followed him.

- Director of Social Services: Ambrose Nabieu

The objective of this position was to provide care for injured combatants and those who had sustained disabilities, but in actual practice, there is some doubt as to the function Ambrose Nabieu performed. Nabieu is said to have served under Norman during his time in the army.

- Director of Communications: Mohammed O. Bangura

As director of communications, Mohammed O. Bangura was in charge of handling wireless communications. The administrative offices (described later) located around the country were all installed with wireless communications capabilities operated by a Communications officer. Bangura was a former soldier who had served as a subordinate of Norman during his time in the army.

Looking at the personnel selected to fill the directorial posts, we find that all of them either had experience operating out of Base Zero or had served in the SLA. Those with experience in the army were selected for their abilities, but another reason for their selection was due to the favour they held with Norman. It becomes obvious that a neo-patrimonial state structure was emerging from Norman's handing out of the ranking posts in the CDF – and thereby the control of their roles – to those in positions subordinate to him.

Directors were provided a monthly remuneration of ten bags of rice (with each bag weighing approximately 50 kg), and a salary of 500,000 leones. The exchange rate in 1998 had the US dollar being approximately 1,600 Leones, so the director salary was roughly equivalent to 300 US dollars. (A deputy director was compensated with five bags of rice and 300,000 Leones.) In addition, directors, their families and their subordinates were able to take advantage of free medical services, and any director who owned a vehicle was supplied with fuel. They also had the right to make use of the wireless communication network. They were provided with a number of benefits.

Organising the CDF in Rural Areas

Next, we look at how the CDF was established in the rural areas of the country. The majority of districts had, at the very least, an administrative office in place. Each administrative office would be involved in the control of military operations that took place within their region of responsibility. For districts with multiple administrative offices, one of the offices would be designated as the head office of the district. The titles of administrators appear in the organisation chart in Figure 10-1, and individuals in that position were in charge of the administrative offices. Any roles below that rank were filled by individuals working in each of the administrative offices.

Administrators were responsible for handling all military activities as well as any administrative functions in the assigned area. At the administrative offices, there would be a deputy administrator, a logistics officer, an intelligence officer and a communications officer.¹⁹⁷ These positions were all administrative in nature. On the other hand, the military wing supplied each of the administrative offices with a single battalion. A battalion commander was placed in charge of each battalion.

Administrative personnel in each region were provided by the local Kamajor groups, most of which had been under the command of Samuel Hinga Norman since the AFRC period. They managed the supplies sent from the central administration and distributed those supplies to the Kamajor groups for the regions they were assigned. In other words, the restructured CDF organisation was constructed upon the PC network that had been built through the activities of Base Zero during the administration of the AFRC.

Below you can find the cities and towns in which the CDF established an administrative office and the name of the administrator in charge of each.¹⁹⁸ A small amount of supplementary commentary has been added for each entry. While the information included wasn't thoroughly investigated, it has been inserted to serve as a reference. The information is written in the following order: district name, followed by name of city or town in which the administrative office is located, followed by the name of the individual in the position of administrator.

- Bo District / Bo City / Multiple individuals in administrator position

The administrator position at Bo was first filled by an individual named Kosseh Hindowa. Hindowa was a Kamajor from Bo, who had gone to Base Zero. Augustine Ngawujia later took over as administrator. There were two battalions barracked in Bo District. The city of Bo was home to the 19th battalion, while Koribondo was where the 13th battalion was stationed. Before being made administrator, Ngawujia served as battalion commander of the 19th battalion.

- Kenema District / Kenema City / Arthur Koroma

Arthur Koroma was a Kamajor from Kenema and first travelled to Gendema in order to obtain the support of the Kamajors there. After Norman moved to Base Zero, Koroma continued to receive supply support, but then it came from Base Zero instead of Gendema. Kenema District had battalions stationed in the city of Kenema, Joru and Panguma.

- Bonthe District / Mattru Jong / XXX Becker (Given name unknown)

Becker implemented a reorganisation of the Kamajors in Bonthe District after the May 25 coup.

- Moyamba District / Moyamba / Tejan Sankoh

Tejan Sankoh had been a member of parliament during the Kabbah administration's first term. He is said to have been related to both the Mende and the Susu peoples.

- Pujehun District / Zimmi / Eddie Massallay

Eddie Massallay was the leader of the Gendema Kamajors. Please refer to Chapter 8 for further detail about Massallay.

The administrators described thus far were all Kamajors and all had served directly under the leadership of Samuel Hinga Norman. Consider Pujehun District as an example. The leader of the Gendema Kamajors, Eddie Massallay, was made an administrator. The town of

Gendema is located in Pujehun District, and Massallay himself was a native of Pujehun. Ibrahim Tucker managed to hold onto his post as battalion commander of the 2nd battalion (From this point forward, the battalion that was stationed in Pujehun will be referred to as the 2nd battalion). We can see from this that the Gendema Kamajors were also brought under the umbrella of control held by the PC network based out of Base Zero.

In contrast, the administrators in the northern province were directly responsible to M.S. Dumbuya not to Samuel Hinga Norman. This is because Dumbuya organised hunter militias in the northern province to integrate into the CDF. During the time the AFRC controlled the country, Dumbuya was dispatched to Liberia by President Kabbah, and he joined the Civil Defence Forces. He later played a role in assimilating units of combatants from the northern province into the CDF. The northern province is not an area where the Mende people live. It wasn't until the second term of the Kabbah administration that any effort was made to bring the hunter militias of the northern province under the command of the CDF. Dumbuya was the person who was responsible for the successful assimilation of those units. Administrator posts in the northern province were filled by non-Mende individuals belonging to hunter militia groups in that region, and they were subordinate to M.S. Dumbuya.

- Bombali District / Location of administrative office unknown / Sheik A.T. Sesay

Bombali District is located in the north, and is not a Mende land. Sheik A.T. Sesay was brought into the CDF command structure in order to ensure that the Kaprah and Gbenthi – two hunter militia groups from the region that he had organised – would join the CDF.

- Koinadugu District / Location of administrative office unknown / Nyamakoro Sesay

Nyamakoro Sesay reformed the Tamaboro paramilitary group that had been previously disbanded (see Chapter 5 for details), in order to bring them into the CDF organisational structure.

Next, we take a look at Kailahun District and Kono District. Both of these districts had been under the control of the RUF, so the administrative office in the eastern province ended up being opened in Kenema. The administrator for Kailahun District was an individual named Kande G. Samai.

Samai was the person responsible for gathering the Kamajors of Kailahun District. He had experience working as a teacher and had worked as the headmaster of a school. He had received the support of both the Gendema Kamajors and of Base Zero.

The administrator of Kono District was named Sahr Buffa (The Mende people are not the dominant ethnicity of Kono District – it is the homeland of the Kono people). Buffa was ethnically Kono, and was a traditional hunter known as a *Donso*. Buffa and his subordinates were Kono, but it is said that they were put through the initiation rites by Kamajor initiators (Nonetheless, they still took the name of Donso). Because the CDF was engaged in its campaign to mop up the remaining RUF combatants, they kept in contact with Donso in Guinea. The CDF worked in collaboration with Sensee Kwegba in the south-western Guinean town of Nongoa, in which a refugee camp was located. This allegedly allowed the administrative office in Sierra Leone to coordinate attacks from the Guinean side of the border. While Kwegba was also a Donso, apparently he didn't participate in initiation rites conducted by a Kamajors initiator.

Administrators received a supply of rice based upon the number of combatants who were under the administrative office. The decision on how much rice to distribute to the combatants, and how much to take for their own use, was left up to the judgement of each administrator. Naturally, they could also sell the rice. The administrators also received the funding they needed to be able to provide other supplies. Just as with the distribution of the rice, how that funding was used was up to the administrator. Embezzlement of the supplies provided was not limited to the administrator level – it occurred at all levels of the supply chain. It is possible that the supplies provided to the CDF were supplied under the presumption that a portion would serve as a form of kickback on the way down the supply chain.

Here we end our discussion on CDF administrative offices and administrators. From the locations of those administrative offices, we see clearly that the CDF was still primarily a Kamajor organisation, and the participation of other ethnic groups was limited. The individuals who were made administrators in the traditionally Mende land were assigned to leaders of Kamajor groups which had been active in the areas and had served under Hinga Norman since the time at Base Zero, receiving support from Norman. In comparison, the administrator positions in the non-Mende northern province were – at the request of northern province native M.S. Dumbuya – filled by leaders of hunter militias from other ethnicities that had been brought into the CDF command structure.

The Initiation Wing

While there is no section included in Figure 10-1, the initiators in each region were organised into the initiation wing. At the top of the initiation wing stood the high priest, Allieu Kondewa. Allieu Kondewa had been no more than the initiator of a single Kamajor group until the establishment of Base Zero. After Base Zero was built, Kondewa came to be involved in the decision-making process as the right-hand man of Samuel Hinga Norman. Even after Ahmad Tejan Kabbah returned to his post as a president, Kondewa maintained his position as trusted confidant to Norman.

In the CDF, the responsibilities of the initiators were limited to the roles they played in the initiation ceremonies, and those who were initiated were transferred to the military wing. However, initiators had already formed and were commanding their own military units, and did not want to release control of those units. In order to find a compromise with those initiators who had a vested interest in maintaining their own units, the initiation wing was provided with its own dedicated resource allocation system. In other words, they received resources through a different supply chain from that of the military wing described above, and the Kamajor units under the command of initiators were permitted to continue to exist alongside the units of the military wing.

There were many initiators in Bo and Kenema. For that reason, the headquarters of the initiation wing were established in Bo. The

initiator who was placed in command of logistical support for the initiation wing was an individual known by the name of Doctor Massallay, who spoke to me about how the initiation wing was established.

After President Kabbah returned, the initiators were also restructured into the initiation wing. However, that restructuring was very difficult because the initiators had never received a school education. I became the head of logistics for the initiation wing. I had previously been sent to Gendema from Tihun as a messenger. Also, I also had experience on the front lines. All of my experiences were considered valuable. One must be cautious when obtaining and distributing supplies. If you do a poor job, you might be killed by someone who was unsatisfied with you. [...]

At the time, there were a lot of initiators, and there was a drop in quality of the ceremonies being performed – that was seen as a problem. At first, all of the initiators were from the village of Kale. But, at the time we are talking about, there were many people who weren't from Kale but had come to be called initiators. To prevent a drop of quality in the initiation rites, we talked about whether we should test the initiators by having them shoot a gun at the Kamajors who had been initiated by them. But such forcible measures could lead to rebellion. So, we decided to provide different amounts of supplies to the different initiators. We put out the headquarters of the initiation wing in Bo, where we gathered the supplies all the initiators needed, and from there, we distributed the supplies to the initiators.¹⁹⁹

In this way, the initiators were restructured into an organisation that was formed differently from the military wing and the administrative wing.

The Organisation of non-Kamajor Hunter Militia Groups

While the AFRC was in control, the CDF appealed to hunter militias belonging to other ethnicities to join with them in solidarity to fight against the junta forces. They used a propaganda campaign in which they called on 'all vigilante groups and hunter militias to join together under the name CDF'. However, at the time, most of the

CDF were Kamajors. The aims of the propaganda campaign were realised when the Kabbah administration was reinstated.

However, the integration of other ethnicities was never more than superficial. As previously mentioned, M.S. Dumbuya had the sole responsibility for commanding the CDF in the northern province in his role as northern commander. M.S. Dumbuya had already initiated contact with the hunter militia groups of the northern province when the AFRC was still in power, but those lines of communication were limited to specific communities (TRC 3A 2004: 294). In the second term of the Kabbah administration, the groups in the northern province were more broadly organised. The hunter militias that joined the CDF were the Kapra and Bethi militias of the Temne people, and the Tamaboro militia of the Kuranko people.²⁰⁰ Please think back to the events covered in Chapter 5. The Tamaboro were formed during the time of the NPRC government, but after their leadership was killed, the group dissipated. The Tamaboro organisation was rebuilt by the CDF. Nyamakoro Sesay responded to the offer presented by M.S. Dumbuya, taking on the position of administrator in Koinadugu District and becoming commander of the newly reformed Tamaboro group. I was unable to find anyone who knew much about this individual over the course of my research, but I did discover that at the very least he was known as 'Dumbuya's man'. In the same way, the hunter militias were organised in Bombali District through the efforts of M.S. Dumbuya.

However, the Kamajors did not have a good relationship with the other hunter militia groups. Northern commander M.S. Dumbuya was responsible for supplying the hunter militias of the northern province with weapons and ammunition, but Norman hesitated to provide Dumbuya with any weapons or ammunition. M.S. Dumbuya repeatedly asked Norman for materiel support for the north, but Norman continued to reject his petitions. Dumbuya testified that Norman did not trust the hunter militia of the northern province, and Norman was worried about giving M.S. Dumbuya too much power. In the end, the hunter militias gathered from the ethnic groups of the northern province had a stronger relationship with ECOMOG than they did with the CDF. They approached ECOMOG and were used as guides (TRC 3A 2004: 294).²⁰¹

It wasn't only the ethnic groups of the north who were brought into the CDF – the inhabitants of the areas around Freetown were also mobilised. The inhabitants of the capital region were organised into the Organized Body of Hunting Societies (OBHS) – the so-called 'Krio hunter militia'. The majority of those in the OBHS were never actually involved in the fighting, but rather only stood guard duty at check points. Incidentally, the OBHS was led by the western area commander, who was a Mende in the Kamajors. As this suggests, the young men mobilised in the cities were picked up by the Kamajors and brought under their command.

By mobilising the OBHS and the ethnicity-based vigilante groups of the northern province, the CDF was at least nominally restructured into an organisation of associated ethnic groups, but the fact that the majority of CDF members were Kamajors did not change.

The Brookfields Hotel

After President Kabbah was restored to his position of a president of Sierra Leone, the Kamajors began to be stationed in the city of Freetown. The Kamajors barracks were set up at the Brookfields Hotel, which was located on Jomo Kenyatta Avenue. Naturally, the hotel was no longer in operation, but the Kamajor barracks were located within the former hotel. Before the hotel began to be used by the CDF, it was used to house the combatants of the RUF. The RUF began to use the hotel as its garrison upon their entry into Freetown after the coup on 25 May 1997 (Hoffman 2007a: 410). After the AFRC/RUF forces were defeated, the Brookfields Hotel was taken over by the CDF. The majority of combatants garrisoned there were Kamajors, but there were small numbers of members of hunter militias from other ethnicities as well (Hoffman 2005b; 2007a).

The hotel comprised 150 rooms spread across a number of two- and three-storey buildings, and also had a pool. The hotel was surrounded by walls and was in the form of a compound. Electricity and provisions were supplied by the government. Electricity was supplied by a generator. It is said that the generator and the fuel needed to run it were provided by the Kabbah administration. Many people lived in each room of the hotel. Anthropologist Danny

Hoffman conducted field research at the Brookfields Hotel and he described it in the following way.

In a city of rolling blackouts, the electricity at Brookfields is remarkably reliable. The occupants of the handful of rooms with a working television or stereo can generally run them when they wish. The wall-mounted air conditioners in the elite block hum and drip more or less on command. And in those rooms occupied by a loose collection of relations whose comings and goings preclude the easy division of the day into periods of rest and activity (and most rooms are of exactly this sort), the lights tend to stay on throughout the night. (Hoffman 2005b)

It is said that there were hundreds of Kamajors living at the Brookfields Hotel with their wives, girlfriends, children, parents and friends. One Kamajor described what daily life at the Brookfields Hotel was like as follows:

At this time Brookfields Hotel is completely peaceful. At times like that, you have the combatants' wives there busy cleaning up in the morning, looking for food for their children and men. You will find people who are on the side taking wine and drinking the local brewed palm wine popularly known as poyo. Others will engage in playing checkers. The whole place gets lively. Some people are going out into town. Some other people are playing football games in the yard. Some of the people are quietly reading, because we also had intellectuals among us. We had people who were in school, but because of the war they had stopped going. Some combatants are busy cleaning their weapons. Other pictures you may see is women fussing and fighting some for very trivial matters. Some commanders are engaging in meetings, planning their next operations. Some want to make sure their men are always ready and fit. That is about what you will find at Brookfields on a normal day, a day without any operations. Everybody is busy doing what he is supposed to do. No one is harassing anybody. Soldiers' wives and dependents are free to move about as long as you cause no trouble. They go out into the market and come back and do

their cooking. Some would cook in the day; some would cook at the night.

But the other picture of the Brookfields is on days when there are operations at hand – when there is war to fight. Men have to be moved to the frontlines. You would see more of a military barracks than a peaceful settlement. You would see soldiers/fighters being called to assemble by their commanders. You would see military vehicles coming in, and you would see logistics officers going to the arms depots, and arms are brought in, and arms are issued out, and people are falling into line while instructions are given.

The women will go back to the rooms, with their children, and they will be spying through the windows. There will be passersby in the street curiously watching out. The vehicles will get into lines and start moving out. In the same manner, they are some returning from the front. There would be some fighters that come back to rest and fresh fighters are loaded to go back as reinforcements. Soldiers and vehicles come and go in convoys. It is a tense situation because everybody is concerned with what is happening, especially the women. They want to know what has happened to their husbands and loved ones since they went to the front line. There are a lot of questions. People are curious. You will see the place is quiet. You will see just little life. If word comes about the death of a fighter, that family will cry. They are sad, but they will suppress their emotions. They will only sob in their rooms.

Others will go to sympathize with them. When news of wounded fighters comes through, their families and friends will run out to go to the hospitals. Tense situations, but very sombre too. This is your second picture. (Cox 2012)

In the strictest sense, Brookfields Hotel was being utilised as a military base, but it may be better described as a place for combatants to live.

Hoffman also described the conditions for an initiator living at the hotel.

Kemoh Muniro, an initiator from Pujehun whose Born Naked Brigade achieved a certain notoriety during the war, lived on the ground

floor of Block A. He installed over the gate a tall controller, an occult device meant to repel mortar rounds from the surrounding hillsides and to alert the kamajors in case of attack. No doubt Kemoh Muniro had planted the hotel perimeter with less visible protections as well—small bits of paper and cloth covered in koranic inscription, buried in the ground or secreted over doors or inside cracks in the walls. (Hoffman 2011a: 198)

The hotel was used as a place for combatants to live. The inhabitants of Freetown were afraid of the people staying there and did not approach the hotel closely. The police were no exception to this. Anthropologist Danny Hoffman states that he spoke to a Kamajor at Brookfields Hotel during his research there in this excerpt from his book:

‘Meet anyone you want on the hotel grounds’, he (the Kamajor) suggested, ‘but be careful anywhere else in the city. The police and CID (Criminal Investigation Division) are corrupt, but they do not dare enter the hotel’. (Hoffman 2007a: 214)

Hoffman also explained that United Nations peacekeepers sometimes went to the hotel, but that most were Nigerians looking for ‘their girlfriends or drugs or stolen goods’. British military advisors were also periodically visiting the hotel, though they would travel ‘in armed packs and never stay long’. The visits by British military advisors were short and would involve consultations with ‘CDF commanders on some detail of the disarmament’ (Hoffman 2005b).

CDF Military Operations

Hoffman relates a story that provides some detail about the CDF military strategy during this time period.

For example, Bobo Sau, who was responsible for driving one of the four wheel drive pickup trucks the kamajors used during attacks, liked to tell the story of an ‘operation’ in the eastern part of the city. Chief Norman ordered a group of kamajors to clear out a house that

he claimed was being used by rebel collaborators, although it was also well-known that Norman was involved in a business dispute with the owner of the residence. As the militiamen herded people from the building, a crowd of local residents gathered and threw stones at the kamajors, creating enough of a confrontation that a contingent of Nigerian peacekeepers was deployed to secure the area. In the meantime, Bobo Sau told me, he facilitated the kamajor unit's escape by running the pickup truck back and forth through the crowd. 'We damaged a lot of people that day', he concluded. (Hoffman 2007a: 414)

In addition, Wlodarczyk presented a story told by a Kamajor that touches upon a joint Kamajor/ECOMOG operation in rural area.

A group of Kamajors were in battle together with some ECOMOG troops. One Kamajor was in a van that held a gallon tank of magic water – a potion for protection in battle. The van also held several similar tanks full of diesel. As they came under fire, ECOMOG soldiers came running towards the van crying 'give me the magic water'. They had seen how the van was unharmed by the bullets, like a reversed magnet repelling the fire, and they too wanted to get the same protection. They came into the van, but confused the tanks and took ones that contained diesel, not the magic water. But they thought they were protected and went back into battle stronger and fiercer. The Kamajor stayed in the van with the real protection. (Wlodarczyk 2009: 113)

Samuel Hinga Norman's Activities

Through my research, I was only able to uncover a partial account of Samuel Hinga Norman's activity in the time after the Kabbah administration was restored. One reason for this was, although I was able to initiate contact with combatants close to him during his time in Monrovia and at Base Zero, I was unable to find any who were close with him during the Kabbah administration. Because he was active in Freetown's political circles at that time, combatants had comparatively fewer chances to see him. Albert Nallo from Base Zero had a certain extent of contact with Norman, and spoke to me about him. Bo District Administrator Augustine

Gauja was a subordinate to Nallo during his time at Base Zero. Like administrator Gauja, Nallo himself also stayed in Bo. Nallo said that after the return of President Kabbah, the relationship between Nallo and Norman worsened.

Norman came to me and told me he had to talk to me about something. He told me to attack ECOMOG. I thought that was a bad idea, so I refused. When I did, Norman circumvented the administrative office and made direct contact with the commanders in the field. The office was left behind. After that, strategic orders were communicated by bypassing the administrative office. I consulted with the director of war, Moinina Fofana, and he told us to stay in Bo where we were. After that, our rice provisions were reduced.²⁰²

Nallo's statement illustrates for us that Norman was conducting the war in the same way as he had done during his time at Base Zero – by exercising his influence to use the organisation in his own arbitrary way. Any who refused to become his personal subordinates would find that their supplies would be reduced.

3. The CDF internal power struggle as seen through Sparrow's experiences

Sparrow was arrested and detained by the Liberian government in the period of the AFRC administration, but he was released upon the restoration of the Kabbah administration. He was able to cross back into Sierra Leone, but he later became entangled in the power struggles that arose within the CDF organisation. He spoke about the internal power struggle within the PC network in terms of his own experiences. Exactly how did that struggle for power unfold within the PC network? To find an answer to this question, here we take a closer look at Sparrow's experience. In this section, we look at Sparrow's experiences as he related them to me, with some supplementary information. Therefore, this section is a reflection of Sparrow's considerably subjective understanding of the period.

Sparrow's Release

As previously described in Chapter 8, Sparrow was arrested by the Liberian government during the period that the AFRC was in control of Sierra Leone. However, he was fortunately released when the Kabbah administration was restored to government. Sparrow's release was realised through the intervention of the National Union of Sierra Leone Students, which petitioned the government of Sierra Leone. Sparrow explained that the recipient of the petition by the National Union of Sierra Leone Students was Shirley Gbujama. Gbujama was then a part of the Kabbah Administration, serving as minister of tourism and culture. The petition received by Gbujama was passed on to the person then serving as the minister of foreign affairs. The Sierra Leone government began negotiations with Charles Taylor's regime in Liberia, and when the Kabbah administration was restored, Sparrow was given a pardon and released. Sparrow explained how he was released.

I was suddenly told to get out of the prison. Then I was taken to a shop by car, and they put me in a suit. From there, they took me directly to the airport, and put on a chartered airplane.

Sparrow was taken by airplane from Liberia to Lungi International Airport. Sparrow said that he was taken directly from Lungi to the stadium where the president's welcoming ceremony was being held. There he met Shirley Gbujama, who expressed her appreciation for what he had gone through and asked him to describe his experiences. Sparrow added that Norman, who was Kabbah's Deputy Minister of Defence, was also there.

Afterwards, Norman had Sparrow taken to the Cape Sierra (a hotel in Freetown), where he was told to take some time to rest for a while. Sparrow said that a number of figures frequented the hotel, including Allieu Kondewa – who had been made high priest by then – and his subordinate Doctor Jibeo; director of logistics Mustapha Lumeh; and director of public relations Charles Moniwo. Sparrow continued his story as follows:

When I was arrested, Norman probably thought I would end up dying in prison. It was the infamous Taylor regime, so it wouldn't be odd for him to think I would never return. But that very thing happened to me on the 10th of March. He must have been surprised too [...] I pleaded with him, telling him that I had no money, but he didn't give me even one leone. I had to wear the same suit for two weeks.

Sparrow had suddenly appeared before Norman, and Sparrow's very existence was an eyesore to him from that point. After the establishment of Base Zero, there had been trouble between Base Zero and the Gendema Kamajors. What is more, the Gendema Kamajors had a better reputation than the Kamajors from Base Zero. ECOMOG had worked together with the Kamajors/CDF in restoring the Kabbah administration, and it too placed greater importance on the Gendema Kamajors than they did on Base Zero. Before the operation to recapture Freetown had begun, Eddie Massallay had frequently travelled to Lungi International Airport to meet with ECOMOG. As previously mentioned, the Gendema Kamajors were thought to be better organised and more skilled, so they were easier to make use of.

Norman and the rest of the Kamajors at Base Zero did not think well about the emphasis on using the Gendema Kamajors. With Sparrow's release, one of those individuals who had successfully organised the Gendema Kamajors and made them into a more efficient fighting force had appeared before Norman's eyes.

It is Sparrow's opinion that Norman probably thought if Tejan Sankoh and the other members of parliament who had been dispatched to Liberia ever discovered Sparrow had been returned alive, they might introduce him to President Kabbah. If they did that, the Gendema Kamajors could possibly return to the spotlight again, and with that, Norman might lose both his financial resources and his influence. Sparrow stated his belief that Norman ordered Sparrow to stay at Lungi International Airport in order to avoid such a development.

One time when Sparrow was at Lungi, Norman approached him with the suggestion that Sparrow go and visit Base Zero to see what it was like. Sparrow explained how he felt during the conversation.

That guy [Norman] was totally trying to have me killed. I didn't even know a single person at Base Zero. But there were many people there who were under Norman's control. Going to Base Zero would have been like going to have myself assassinated. I am not that stupid a person. If Norman had been a bit smarter, he would have given me the money I needed to buy a change of clothes and let me stay at the hotel. If he had done that, and then told me to go visit Base Zero, I might have actually gone ...

I thought that following Norman's order and going to Base Zero would have been suicide. In the end, I decided not to stay around the Freetown area, but instead to go to Zimmi [where the Gendema Kamajors stationed at that time]. In Zimmi, I had friends, and they would give me lots of help.

At the time, the Gendema Kamajors were stationed in Zimmi. The CDF Special Forces were also stationed there. As previously mentioned, the Gendema Kamajors were operating as the 2nd battalion, and were in charge of military operations in Pujehun District.

However, the CDF Special Forces were being subjected to some adversity. After Sparrow's return to Sierra Leone, the CDF Special Forces were separated and sent to Zimmi, Bo and Kenema, and to Masiaka in the northern province. Sparrow said that after going to Zimmi, he himself was also dispatched to Masiaka, and he helped in the hunt for the remaining AFRC/RUF forces. Being located in the northern province, the town of Masiaka lies far from the Liberian border, and it not a Mende land. This could be seen as evidence of Norman's talent at weakening his internal enemies.

In order to ensure cooperation continued, the CDF Special Forces, which were divided and dispatched to several administrative offices, placed mid-ranked commanders and individuals capable of carrying out administrative work in each of the offices. However, combatants under the rank of commander were freely moved from

garrison to garrison to lend their strength where needed. Contact between the different administrative offices was achieved through wireless radios installed in each office. One Liberian combatant who represented the Special Forces in Bo provided the following statement.

I was stationed in Bo, and I was the Special Forces representative for Bo. When Special Forces members from Zimmi travelled to the capital in Freetown, we offered them a place to stay for the night. The Special Forces didn't have a bad reputation among the people in town, and it wasn't an uncomfortable place to stay.²⁰³

Sparrow Gets Shot

While Sparrow was living in Zimmi, he was named to the position of co-administrator. In that role, he served as assistant to Eddie Massallay, who was the administrator of Pujehun District. Sparrow explained that he received his salary as administrator, and also received a rice allowance for his Special Forces, so his living arrangements were not too difficult.

However, Sparrow ended getting shot in late 1998. The person behind the gun was Joseph Fefegura, the Deputy Head of Transportation and a cousin to Samuel Hinga Norman. Sparrow spoke about the time he was shot.

At that time, I was living there in Gendema. I had gone there then so I could get in contact with my father. Even after I was released from prison, my father didn't know I was still alive. When I got out, I came straight to Sierra Leone by plane. There was no way I could get in contact with my father after I arrived in Sierra Leone. I wanted to be able to tell him I was alive face to face. ECOMOG was operating along the border then [on the Sierra Leone side], and they had wireless radios. I went to Gendema so I could get in touch with my father in Monrovia by radio. I arrived in Gendema at night.

Fefegura followed me and then turned up later in Gendema.

He told me that there would be an important meeting the next day in Zimmi. He said the Chief [Norman] would be there, and that all of us [in leadership positions] had to attend the meeting. He told me that

I especially had to go. I told him okay. We decided to leave for Zimmi with the dawn. A car had been sent from Zimmi. But there were only enough extra seats for me. I told Fefegura, 'You know that I won't be going anywhere without my aides-de-camp. We need enough space for three people. There's no way I'm going to get in that car alone'.

During the civil war, no one should travel alone. That was my rule. If you have your aides-de-camp with you, if someone tries to kill you, there will be an exchange of fire. That means that there will be victims on the other side as well. During the civil war, you never knew what could happen. They might try to have me killed somewhere between Zimmi and Gendema. They were probably going to pretend that I died in an attack.

I refused to go with them [...] they left me there and left without me, and came back in the evening. That night, the meeting was held in Gendema and all of the commanders and other leaders were there. My aides waited for me outside. Joseph Fefegura, Andrew Hardin and other people were at the meeting. During the meeting, I asked them what they had talked about during the meeting in Zimmi. I asked them three times, but no one would answer my question. I assumed that they just didn't want to talk about it, so I decided to forget about it ... at some point Fefegura took out a revolver and put it on the table.

I told him, 'Hey Fefegura, why are you using that kind of gun? Commanders like you shouldn't be using guns like that. There's no safety on that kind of gun. Something bad could happen at any time. You should be using a gun like this'. Then I took out my own automatic handgun [sic] and explained to him how the safety on that kind of gun works. Fefegura checked the cylinder of his gun and found two bullets in it. I put my gun back in its holster.

So, the meeting finished, and I got up out of my seat. That was the exact moment that Fefegura shot me. I think he was aiming for my chest, but because I had just stood up, the bullet hit me in the groin, passed through my body, and out the back. My aides outside and the ECOMOG soldiers heard the gunshot and came inside. I remember crawling towards the door and trying to get away. Then I fainted. I lost consciousness. The rest of the story is what I heard from my aides and my friends.

Fefegura lost the chance to shoot a second time because the ECOMOG soldiers and my aides came running in to help. ECOMOG took me to the garrison at Teni [located inside Liberia]. It was about a seven-mile [approximately 12 km] trip to Teni. However, because I was banned from entering the country by the Liberian government, as soon as the emergency surgery was over, I was quickly returned to Gendema. In Gendema, Tucker [Gendema Kamajors commander Ibrahim Tucker] called for a helicopter from Freetown [At the time, Tucker was serving as the commander of Pujehun District's 2nd battalion]. But his request was refused. There was no choice but to take me to Kenema by car. My aides told me that it looked like they purposefully drove slowly. In Kenema, they tried to operate on my wound, but it didn't go well, so they were going to have to take me to Freetown. Tucker asked to have a plane or a helicopter sent to take me there, but Norman ignored the request. There was no prospect of finding transportation. Days later, Norman arrived in Kenema by charter plane. He was stopping there on the way somewhere else. Tucker and the others went to the airport, and they demanded that Norman take me on his plane to Freetown. But he refused, saying that he had an urgent matter to attend to. Tucker and the other commanders close to me threatened Norman. They said, 'You will be taking Sparrow to Freetown on this plane today. Otherwise, we will be starting a riot today'.

That was how I ended up being taken to Freetown. There was a doctor there from Doctors Without Borders, and they did the surgery and saved me. All of this happened when I was still in the coma.

Sparrow had managed to survive the attempt on his life, but the story did not end here. After Sparrow was shot, the higher-ranked leaders of the CDF Special Forces who had been dispatched around the country were arrested. One ex-commander who was arrested at that time provided the following statement:

I was in Zimmi. Eddie Massallay, who was the head [administrator] of Pujehun District, said, 'The president wants to meet all of you. He wants to show his appreciation to those who fought to restore the government to power'.

So, we were ordered to travel to Freetown. Massallay escorted us, and a few of us [leaders of the CDF Special Forces in Zimmi] set out for Freetown. But on our way, there we were arrested by an ECOMOG unit in Bo. We were being charged with conspiracy. A total of 16 of us from the Special Forces were arrested. But ECOMOG wasn't to know the truth of it. ECOMOG was being used. We were all held for 90 days, but we were released after Sparrow recovered and negotiated with the government.²⁰⁴

According to the story, Eddie Massallay was present when these individuals were under arrest. Perhaps Massallay, as Administrator of Pujehun District, thought that Sparrow was getting in his way as co-administrator.

Sparrow's life was saved after being taken to Freetown. When he learned of the arrest of his subordinates, he didn't wait until he was fully recovered before setting out to fight for their release. Sparrow told me as follows:

I learned that my subordinates had been arrested four days after the fact. By that point, I was getting a little bit better. I left the hospital and went to the ministry of defence to meet with Norman. He broached the subject first, and asked me what I thought they should do with the CDF Special Forces members they'd arrested. I answered his question by saying, 'That's what I came to talk to you about today. Why did they all have to be arrested?'

I pressed him on that, but I was still injured, so I gave up part way through. I needed to rest.

Two weeks later I went back again, but Norman shrugged me off. So instead, I got in contact with the vice president through someone I knew. I met the vice president, and told him the whole story of the CDF Special Forces, from when the unit was formed, to their arrest. The vice president told me that if what I was saying was true, I should write it all down for him. I wrote up the documents and sent them to the vice president, to Maxwell Khobe [who was the chief of staff of the military of Sierra Leone], and to Norman. I went to deliver them to Khobe directly by hand, but he wasn't there. So, I gave them to his second-in-command, a Lieutenant-Colonel named Tanko. That was

where I succeeded, and my subordinates were finally released. While I was staying in Freetown, there was no one who could take care of my own unit. When they were all released, I finally had some leeway, so I had eight bags of rice sent to them.

... Fefegura admitted afterwards that he had made a mistake. The point isn't that it was a mistake. If I had lost my life, he should have lost his life too.²⁰⁵

Sparrow's experience illustrates a part of the internal struggles that arose within the Civil Defence Forces and shows us how people considered to be inconvenient were eliminated. In addition, we get a glimpse of the function of the PC network in Sparrow's statement, 'While I was staying in Freetown, there was no one who could watch over my own unit'. In his role as patron, Sparrow was responsible for supplying provisions and supplies to the CDF Special Forces. We also see from Sparrow's story that he was able to circumvent Norman and get himself into contact with the vice president. This is an illustration of how an individual within the PC network could achieve his or her aims by taking advantage of the rhizomatic nature of the personal connections.

Mohammed Maada Gleh: One of Sparrow's Aides-de-Camp

An experience of Mohammed Maada Gleh, one of Sparrow's aides-de-camp, illustrates the fluid nature of the Kamajor/CDF PC network. This aide had served not only as Sparrow's bodyguard, but also was a handyman who handled various jobs Sparrow needed doing. Maada told me how he became connected to Sparrow.

After Sparrow was shot, he was put on a plane to Freetown. Those who were heavily injured were also carried to Freetown on the same plane. My commander was one of those who had been injured, so he was going to be taken to Freetown too. I was there to accompany him. He didn't have any family in Freetown, so I was there to look after him. Sparrow was admitted to the same hospital.²⁰⁶

Maada's commander suffered permanent damage to his leg and he was no longer able to lead a combat unit. He returned to

his own home village. Maada had lost his patron. In contrast, Sparrow was in the same hospital and would require six months of recuperation. Maada began to take care of Sparrow, doing daily chores that Sparrow needed done. I had the chance to speak to Sparrow about Maada.

The moment I ended up in Freetown, my aides relaxed too much and became useless. Whenever I needed them, they weren't there. But Maada did more work than the two boys. He was really efficient.

As a result of having helped out Sparrow during his recuperation in hospital, Maada became one of Sparrow's aides-de-camp. Maada had managed to find a new patron. After his recuperation was complete, Sparrow returned to the administrative office in Zimmi and Maada followed him there. Sparrow explained that while he remained a commander in the Special Forces, he also avoided going to Freetown, and kept his head down, trying to remain inconspicuous.

4. Major Battles during the Second Kabbah Administration

During the second Kabbah administration, there were two major battles fought in Freetown and the vicinity. They were both attacks by AFRC and RUF forces, with the first attack beginning on 6 January 1999 (referred to below as the January 6 Invasion), and the second occurring in May 2000 (The second attack isn't known by any specific name in particular, so we refer to it simply as the May 2000 incident). In this section, we look at the CDF response to the two attacks.

The January 6 Invasion

The 'January 6 Invasion' refers to the attack on Freetown by AFRC and RUF forces that began on 6 January 1999. The trigger for the attack was when a death sentence was pronounced for RUF leader Foday Sankoh. Sankoh had been arrested in Nigeria on the charge of illegal weapons possession. After President Kabbah was restored to power, Sankoh was handed over to the government of Sierra Leone. He was then sentenced to death in October 1998.

Responding the death sentence for Sankoh, an RUF commander, Sam Bockarie (alias Masqita or Mosquito), declared a new operation to invade Freetown. The AFRC and RUF forces gave the attack the name ‘Operation No Living Thing’, and Bockarie stated that he was going to kill everyone in the country ‘to the last chicken’. AFRC/RUF units scattered throughout the country ‘received orders’ through radio broadcasting. Unit after unit, they began to make their way towards Freetown (Gberie 2005: 121–122). The AFRC/RUF used radio broadcasting to give out their orders in the same way as the Kamajors/CDF had sent out their own orders over radio during their war against the junta. AFRC/RUF forces travelled from across the country to Freetown and, by the New Year, they had attacked the towns of Hastings and Waterloo on the outskirts of Freetown (see Figure 9-1). After attacking the towns on the outskirts, they travelled through the bush or changed into normal clothes and disappeared amongst the civilian population, in order to make their way in secret towards Freetown.

At 3 am on 6 January, the AFRC/RUF began their attack on Freetown. Combatants – who had entered the city with guns hidden – and opened fire in different locations around the city. Other combatants came down the mountains into the city (Freetown is built around the lower slopes of a mountain). Those combatants set out directly for Pademba Road Prison, which is where Foday Sankoh was being held. They chased off the ECOMOG guards on duty and freed the prisoners held within. However, they soon discovered that Sankoh was not among them. The government had suspected that the RUF may attack the prison, so by the time the AFRC/RUF combatants had arrived Sankoh had already been moved to another location. At seven in the morning, the attackers targeted State House, the presidential residence. President Kabbah evacuated to Lungi International Airport in order to ensure security.²⁰⁷

The fighting continued in Freetown for the two weeks following the initial attack on 6 January. Even though it had taken the AFRC/RUF more than a month to advance on the city, the Kabbah administration had not been sufficiently prepared for the battle. In addition, the CDF forces garrisoned at the Brookfields Hotel didn’t have sufficient weaponry to resist the invading forces. The reason for

the latter was that President Kabbah didn't trust the CDF and wanted to avoid having them armed whenever possible. That is why CDF combatants were only provided with weapons when necessary. ECOMOG forces were also insufficiently prepared for the assault. I spoke to the national base commander – the individual in charge of the garrison at the Brookfields Hotel – about the January 6 Invasion.

The rebels came down from the mountains and attacked us. They were wearing regular clothes and walking in the streets, when all of a sudden, they took out their weapons and started shooting. No one at the Brookfields Hotel was prepared to fire back when it was attacked. Plenty of people died that day.²⁰⁸

In addition, the report released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission contains the following description of the CDF response to the attack on January 6.

The morale among the young Kamajors was at an all-time low when the AFRC-led troop entered Freetown on 6 January 1999. The base at the Brookfields Hotel was attacked and ransacked within 24 hours of the initial entry and many of its Kamajor inhabitants were captured and killed. Thereafter the participation of the Kamajors in the defence of Freetown became something far more peripheral. Their deployment history and elementary training meant they were not suited to the travails of urban warfare in a built-up environment. As a collective force, their main contribution was reserved for the 'mopping up' phase that followed the main operation to liberate the city ...

Chief Hinga Norman was reportedly 'in hiding' in Pujehun District along with Eddie Massallay, far from the heat of the battle. In his wake Hinga Norman had secured only an ad-hoc arrangement for the command and control of the Kamajors encamped in Freetown. Hence, ammunition boxes were being delivered sporadically by ECOMOG and then transported to various points in the city that were considered to be 'front lines' by self-appointed Kamajor commanders. (TRC 3A 2004: 328)

The CDF were forced to withdraw from the Brookfields Hotel. They retreated to Wilberforce Barracks – the headquarters of the army – and ended holed up there for three days alongside soldiers from the newly reformed SLA and ECOMOG forces.

The combatants of the AFRC and RUF were well acquainted with the city of Freetown. They knew which roads to take as detours and pass through the interiors of buildings, which let them appear in areas where they weren't expected. The fighting was very difficult for the forces of ECOMOG, as they were unfamiliar with the geographic layout of the city. That is what caused the ECOMOG soldiers to turn to more brutal methods. ECOMOG soldiers began indiscriminately killing anyone they thought was fighting for the AFRC or RUF or cooperating with them. They harassed the inhabitants of the city with continuous interrogations and mercilessly slaughtered everyone they suspected to be a rebel. The CDF forces also took part in this.

More information about the situation surrounding ECOMOG's deployment in Freetown can be found in the documentary film *Cry Freetown*. The film documents the January 6 Invasion using footage taken by Sierra Leonean journalist, Sorius Samura, as he moved around Freetown during the events with a video camera. During the film, viewers see ECOMOG soldiers torturing residents, and in one scene, they shoot a child in the back, killing him. The footage also shows the city's people hiding behind corners as gun battles erupt in the streets, with Kamajors fighting alongside ECOMOG soldiers. Scenes of merciless killing appear one after another, and Samura narrates the events as we watch. He narrates in the movie as follows; 'Just because I was there with my camera, they [ECOMOG soldiers] would not so quick to condemn suspects immediate sentence to death'.

The January 6 Invasion was brought to an end by the arrival of ECOMOG reinforcements. Nigeria sent thousands of extra soldiers to prevent Freetown from falling and to prevent the collapse of the Kabbah administration. Extra soldiers were also sent by Ghana and Mali. As a result, ECOMOG's ranks swelled to approximately 20,000 soldiers. With those extra numbers, the AFRC/RUF's temporary advantage in the fight for Freetown turned to be on the back foot,

and they were forced to withdraw from the capital (Ochiai 2001b: 210–211).

It has been pointed out that the CDF played a minimal role in the defence of Freetown, but they too used aircraft to send Kamajors from around the country to the city. According the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 200 Kamajors were taken by air to Jui (Jui was the town just outside of Freetown mentioned in Chapter 9 that was used as an airfield by the Kamajors/CDF). However, the unit scattered as they had insufficient logistical support and not enough weapons or ammunition. I spoke to one Kamajor who had been taken to Jui from Kenema.

In 1998, [from the time President Kabbah was restored to power] I travelled back and forth between my base in Kenema and the front lines. At the end of 1998, I was meant to go to Freetown. Suddenly, I got the order to hurry to Freetown, so I left for Freetown directly [from the front line] without returning to Kenema. But after the January 6 Invasion, all of us Kamajors were scattered everywhere. We regrouped at Popper Hill [located in the outskirts of the capital] and went to the city to join the fight.²⁰⁹

This statement tells us that CDF combatants from around the country were transported to Freetown around the time of the January 6 Invasion. In any case, it was the arrival of ECOMOG reinforcements that forced the AFRC/RUF to again flee for the hinterland region, and Sankoh was returned to custody at Pademba Street Prison.

After the January 6 Invasion, the government of Sierra Leone came to realise that they could not bring the civil war to an end by force. In addition, Nigeria – which had provided the bulk of ECOMOG's military strength –changed its policy and began to explore the withdrawal of their forces from Sierra Leone. Moreover, the member states of ECOWAS, along with the United Kingdom, United States and United Nations had begun to set up peace talks between the parties. This began a new round of peace negotiations. In May 1999, Sankoh was released and went to the capital city of Togo, Lomé, where the peace talks were being held.

Those negotiations led to the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord in July of that same year. The provisions of the Lomé Peace Accord called for a cessation of hostilities and for amnesty to be granted to Sankoh and other RUF leaders. In addition, it promoted the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, allowed the RUF to become a political party and granted members of the RUF positions in the cabinet. It also laid out the establishment of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD), which would centralise management of Sierra Leone's mineral resources, and named Foday Sankoh as the CMRRD's chairperson. Through the peace accord, Sankoh took a ministerial post in the government and he began living in Freetown thereafter.

The accord also resolved to form The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and dispatch it to the country to observe the peace process. ECOMOG's role was also defined by the peace accord. Whereas it had previously conducted military operations against AFRC/RUF forces in support of the Kabbah government, the peace accord limited the role of ECOMOG to the maintenance of peace and security in the position of neutrality. ECOMOG was no longer permitted to conduct military operations on the behalf of the Kabbah administration. A gradual withdrawal plan was decided upon, and by April 2000, there were no ECOMOG forces remaining in Sierra Leone.

Sparrow and the Brookfields Hotel

After the January 6 Invasion, the CDF began increasing their military strength in the capital. Sparrow and parts of the Special Forces were moved to Freetown, and it was decided that they would begin living in the Brookfields Hotel. There Sparrow was able to establish himself in the position of a patron of a comparatively higher order. In that new position, he ended in competition with Samuel Hinga Norman as a patron in Freetown.

The CDF began to have an increased sense of danger after the January 6 Invasion, and began performing many initiations again. However, as a result of their mobilising a large number of new Kamajors, the CDF were no longer able to maintain control. Citizens

saw discipline within the CDF as a major problem that needed to be rectified. With that, a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) was established to manage the CDF and perform an administrative function.²¹⁰ Vice-President Albert Joe Demby was appointed chair of the committee and five other politicians were included among the members of the committee. Norman was yet another who became a member of the NCC.

Nominally speaking, the goal of the NCC was to regulate discipline among the CDF, but in actuality, the true objective is said to have been to prevent Norman from putting the CDF to his own personal use. The government of Sierra Leone was placing restraints on Norman and his arbitrary use of the CDF. However, Norman ignored the intentions of the NCC and continued to use the CDF in line with his own personal inclinations.

For this reason, the Sierra Leone government made efforts to provide SLA resources to the forces of the CDF through channels not controlled by Norman. In that way, the government would be able to mobilise CDF combatants without having to go through Norman. That is where Sparrow was brought into play. Sparrow became the contact point for supplying provisions to the CDF and was working under Chief of Staff, Maxwell Khobe. From that point on, Sparrow controlled CDF combatant movements in line with the orders of Khobe. The Gendema Kamajors had been carefully organised and had undertaken military training provided by ECOMOG, and before long, they had been brought to Khobe's attention. Sparrow explained how this came about.

Even during the January 6 Invasion, Khobe wanted to have the Gendema Kamajors [The Gendema Kamajors were stationed in Zimmi at that point]. But Norman had the Base Zero Kamajors sent by air instead.

Perhaps the reason Khobe looked to Sparrow was because he had placed such importance on obtaining the Gendema Kamajors. As Chief of Staff of the SLA, Khobe was responsible for distributing SLA resources to the CDF. In his position as intermediary, Sparrow

was able to make many Kamajors dependent on him. Sparrow explained this development.

After that, I was able to gather many Kamajors under my control. Norman was a member of the NCC, so he was able to provide supplies as well, but I had more resources to distribute than he did. After [Foday] Sankoh [the head of the RUF] was arrested [during the events of May 2000 described later], the majority of weapons distributed to the CDF came through my hands. Abu brought his own combatants along to join up with me. Ali, who was in control of the Western Area, also came to me.

Abu and Ali were both former combatants to whom I had been introduced previously through Sparrow. With those CDF resources in his control, Sparrow was on his way to becoming a high-order patron.

The May 2000 Incident

Let us now look closer at the role that Sparrow played during the events surrounding the May 2000 Incident.

Although the Lomé Peace Accord was signed in July 1999, the civil war in fact continued. One reason for that was that there were elements of the AFRC and RUF that refused to agree to the terms of the Peace Accord, and they continued to fight. In May 2000, approximately 500 members of the regionally mobilised United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) were captured by the RUF. That news resulted in a demonstration demanding peace erupting in front of the home of Foday Sankoh. Sankoh's bodyguards opened fire on the demonstrators and a gun battle erupted. In the midst of the confusion, Sankoh was able to effect his escape and he disappeared. Around ten days later, he was discovered near his home, and he was arrested. Once RUF rebels heard about his arrest in the rural areas of the country, they again set out to attack and invade Freetown. For expedience, here we refer to that invasion as the May 2000 Incident.

The Kamajors stationed at Brookfields Hotel set out to stop the invading RUF, and to round up any stragglers. By the time of the

May 2000 Incident, Sparrow had managed to become patron to a large number of people. However, when the events surrounding the incident occurred, SLA Chief of Staff, Maxwell Khobe – who had supported Sparrow – had already passed away. He had collapsed suddenly on 11 April and was taken to Nigeria by air right away. Then, on 19th, he passed away. It had taken only a single week to happen, and after Khobe's death, a new Chief of Staff had been appointed: a man by the name of Major General Tom Carew. The May 2000 Incident happened directly after Major General Carew took over his new position as SLA Chief of Staff. Sparrow described what happened at this time.

The incident was a trial by fire for Carew. He came to Brookfields [Hotel], and told us that he needed manpower. So, we sent combatants for the time being. I later met and negotiated with Carew many times so we could hammer out the details.

One European journalist named Teun Voeten took part in the military operations that were conducted at this time. The quote below comes from a book he wrote about what he experienced then.

We [Voeten and others] stayed another week in Freetown and visited the front line a few times. Scary trips indeed. Packed in the back of a pickup truck with Kamajors and government soldiers, all armed to the teeth, drunk and high. Driving over roads where rebels might be lurking in the bush, ready for ambush. (Voeten 2000: 285)

One day during one of my research trips, I was at Sparrow's house and was just casually reading Voeten's book. A former Kamajor came for a visit at this time – Abu, one of the people I had interviewed previously over the course of my research. When I showed him the book, he started flipping through the pages and stopped at the photograph section. He looked very happy. 'I took part in this operation', he said, and used his finger to point at a young boy holding a gun in his hands.

Look at the boy in this picture. I actually picked this kid up. He was originally in the People's Army [the AFRC/RUF]. He was caught by the CDF and was going to be killed, but I saved him. Then he became one of us. Now he works for the SLA [he was integrated into the national army after the civil war].

All the weapons that we are holding here are weapons that none of us knew anything about. They were new weapons that were first given to us for this operation.²¹¹

Abu kept flipping through the pages of the book and stopped to point at another picture. It was a photograph of a group of combatants riding in the back of a truck. He explained the story surrounding the truck.

This was taken when we were travelling from the Brookfields [Hotel] to Waterloo. But we finished all the food we carried. That same day, we switched with other people, and then returned to Freetown. The next day we passed through Masiaka on our way to Lunsar. There the junta forces split this truck in two.

Abu told me that the truck in the photograph was used to transport people and goods back and forth between Freetown and the front lines. Abu called out to Sparrow, who was also in the house with us. He asked him if he had looked at my book, saying that there were a number of nostalgic photos contained in it (see Photograph 10-1).

For copyright reasons, I am unable to include those photographs here. Any readers who are interested in learning more should obtain Voeten's work (Voeten 2000: 148–149). The book is a resource for those who would like to learn more about the development of the civil war after the AFRC took over control of the government.

Eventually, the invasion of the AFRC/RUF was halted through the intervention of British forces and the fall of Freetown was prevented. The most-cited jurisdiction for the intervention is protection of some 500 British nationals and several other European and Commonwealth citizens for which Britain had consular responsibility in Sierra Leone. However, the scale of the operation

was incredibly large. The deployment included 7 ships, 700 men of 42 Commando Royal Marines, the 1st battalion of the Parachute Regiment, 4 RAF Chinook HC2s and 8 C130 Hercules aircraft fuelled speculations (Williams 2001: 156). Through this large-scale intervention, the RUF was forced to accept and implement the terms of the peace accord. After that point, no more large battles took place around the capital, and Sierra Leone was returned to the road towards normality.

Photograph 10-1: Former Kamajor Abu Bakar Kamara speaking to Sparrow as he points at a book



(Photograph by author, 2012)

5. The Dismantling of the CDF: the Elimination of the PC Network

As the civil war came to a close, the dismantling of the PC network of the CDF began. There were some who aimed to maintain the strength of the CDF in order to protect their own positions of power, but there were also those who split from the CDF and set out to engage themselves in new activities. In this section, we look at the

still gap-filled story surrounding those combatants who distanced themselves from the CDF as the civil war drew to a close, and at those like Samuel Hinga Norman and Allieu Kondewa who aimed to maintain their PC networks.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

After Foday Sankoh was arrested during the events of May 2000, the RUF had no leadership. On 21 August 2000, Issa Sesay was named provisional leader of the RUF. Sesay belonged to a moderate faction within the RUF, and after he took over, the peace process began to proceed relatively smoothly. The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) efforts were resumed in earnest under the leadership of UNAMSIL.

Participation in DDR by combatants was generally achieved through the influence of their commanders. Commanders were provided rewards in return for persuading their subordinates to participate in the DDR programme. I spoke to Brookfields Hotel base commander Mohammed Duai.

[Around the time the civil war was ending], I was working with the DDR. I travelled around and convinced people to take part in the DDR programme. Kamajor senior officers were given money and houses in payment for bringing their men into the DDR; 214 commanders benefited from that.²¹²

Among the leadership were those who walked away from the CDF were individuals who performed administrative duties necessary to the peace-building process. One former Kamajor who had served as a wireless radio operator described his own experience as follows.

I left the CDF in 2001. I found work with NCDDR [the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration]. DDR officers had to be totally impartial. That's why I couldn't join the actual DDR programme. I guess someone must have handed my weapons in as part of the disarmament. I joined the NCDDR because I was invited to maybe do work for them. I was in charge of the radio

when I was with the NCDDR too. This is because I already knew how to operate a radio. When I first started working with the NCDDR, I travelled around the country by helicopter carrying radios and setting them up for other people.²¹³

Stories like these show us that the members of the CDF weren't necessarily waiting around for the CDF to be dismantled. At least some of the Kamajors saw the approaching end of the CDF as an opportunity to find and do something.

In his work, *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia*, anthropologist Danny Hoffman talks about a former commander named Joe who had access to more weapons than he knew what to do with. With the civil war coming to an end, weapons were no longer going to be a resource with which patrons could secure the loyalty of their clients, so Joe tried to make a profit from the vast store of weapons he possessed.

To enter the DDR center, a combatant was required to present a weapon, a large amount of ammunition, or himself as part of a team of fighters operating a 'group weapon'. He needed to demonstrate that he had been a fighter in one of the factions, either through some knowledge of the weapon he held, a faction identification card, or the word of his commanders or comrades. In practice these stipulations left a great deal of room for interpretation and negotiation. Joe negotiated and interpreted for the CDF. No one appointed Joe to this position and the UN did not require it. But no one stopped Joe from making himself indispensable.

Low-ranking commanders of smaller units might have four or five firearms to dispense. Men like Joe had access to vastly more. In addition to the deals he struck before the DDR Program began, Joe had an effective system for profiting on site. Every morning he entered the DDR center grounds in a sagging sedan so loaded with ammunition that its rear fender scraped the rutted road. Young men who turned up at the Bo DDR center from other villages or towns, men who had made no previous deals to enter the proceedings, would go see Joe or bargain with him if they made it to the front of the line. (Hoffman 2011a: 149–151)

Joe's method of dealing with what had become useless weapons illustrates how the CDF as a PC network proceeded to fall apart. The entire process was based on the premise that the resources formerly used for distributing to the clients in the network had become useless as the CDF collapsed.

The Flow of Combatants into Liberia

As the DDR efforts continued, combatants began to leave the CDF. Some of the former CDF combatants ended up travelling to their neighbouring country of Liberia, where they took part in the Second Liberian Civil War. They joined the forces of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) a rebel group that opposed the government of Charles Taylor. LURD forces crossed the border into Liberia from Guinea in 2000, and invaded the country. That was the beginning of the Second Liberian Civil War (which lasted from 2000 to 2003).

After Charles Taylor rose to become President of Liberia in 1997, many members of the political elite were forced to flee Liberia due to the tyranny of the Taylor government. LURD was then founded by politicians who had decided to cooperate with each other and become organised after fleeing the country. Sierra Leone served as the place where LURD was formed, and where the organisation prepared itself for the coming rebellion. The International Crisis Group (ICG), a non-governmental research institution, described the process by which LURD formed in the following way.

Against the backdrop of an unravelling peace process in Sierra Leone, meetings were held in Freetown in February 2000 among the Justice Coalition of Liberia, the Organisation of Displaced Liberians and the Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia (UDL). The latter was an umbrella group comprising the various factions of Liberian dissidents present in Sierra Leone, and brought together by Dr. Laveli Supuwood, a former Liberian minister of justice and senior National Patriotic Front of Liberia political figure, who had fallen out with Taylor in 1994. The meetings produced the declaration of a union of

these anti-Taylor forces into the LURD, which shortly established liaison with the British military.

Sierra Leone appeared to be a natural base of operations for the LURD. Many fighters were already there, the border is just 120 kilometres from Monrovia, and the group enjoys senior political support in the country. However, despite backing from senior Nigerians, Sierra Leone Army officers and Kamajor militia commanders, President Kabbah was disinclined to allow the LURD to use his country as a prominent staging ground for attacks. (ICG 2002a: 4)

I took ICG's research a step further and attempted to learn about the situation in even more detail. The details of what I uncovered in my work can be found below.

The ICG report mentions a group called the Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia (UDL) and describes them as 'an umbrella group comprising the various factions of Liberian dissidents present in Sierra Leone'. In fact, the CDF Special Forces were also connected to this organisation. Within the UDL was a Liberian politician who acted as leader (We'll call this individual 'L'). However, actual military operations were organised and conducted by the CDF Special Forces. As mentioned in previous chapters, a majority of the Special Forces were combatants from Liberia.

The UDL was formed when 'L' dispatched a secretary to meet a politician from Sierra Leone (who we will call 'S') and the secretary had on their person documents detailing the planned uprising. 'L' had funding, used those funds to build up military strength, and attempted to play the role of political leader. 'L's secretary told this story to 'S' and 'S' contacted Chief of Staff, Maxwell Khobe, to discuss the matter. Khobe had long thought that to end the civil war in Sierra Leone, he would have to topple the Taylor administration that was supporting the AFRC/RUF (In fact, Taylor's government had provided support to the AFRC/RUF for the January 6 Invasion). Khobe decided to offer his support to 'L's plan (cf. ICG 2002a: 3–4). Sparrow was the individual who was called to put the plan into motion. Khobe was thinking about using the CDF Special Forces as a part of L's plan to launch their uprising.

Apparently, Khobe ordered Sparrow and his second in command, Ibrahim Jalloh, to come up with a battle strategy. Jalloh explained that they were ‘ordered to have a strategy ready within 72 hours and to prepare a report outlining the strategy’.²¹⁴ I spoke to one Sierra Leonean combatant about how the CDF Special Forces came to be involved in the armed uprising.

One day, Sparrow came to us and told us that our mission had changed – our mission was now going to be the overthrow of the Taylor regime. Most of the Special Forces were Liberian, and they were all thinking that they would be able to go home. I didn’t have any objection. Other Sierra Leonean combatants had no objection too.²¹⁵

Many other politicians in addition to ‘L’ gave their approval of the plan, and the UDL was reformed as the ODL. However, the ODL plan never reached the implementation stage. One of the politicians who had been in the ODL fled to Guinea with the organisation’s funds. That politician mobilised his own combatants in Guinea (under his own command) and, using the money he had taken, began fighting under the name of The Justice Coalition of Liberia (JCL). But the attacks of the JCL never reached a level that was recognised as any more than sporadic. The politician in question returned to Sierra Leone after giving up on starting an uprising of his own accord. Other Liberian politicians scattered through other countries later began to gather together in Sierra Leone and, after their having come together in cooperation, LURD was founded in February of 2000.

LURD received approval to take action from the SLA and from the CDF. Moreover, they also managed to gain the support of the government of Guinea, and a rear base was built for them in the town of Macenta inside Guinea. Sierra Leone was designated Base 1 and Guinea was designated Base 2 at the time. The two bases were a part of the planned attack into Liberia to be launched from the two different countries.

Once the Liberian politicians had established LURD, they began to gather combatants together to actually take part in the fighting. Sparrow and the Special Forces were connected to that planning

stage. Beginning in around 2000, the Brookfields Hotel had become a place for LURD combatants to stay (Hoffman 2007a). Not only did they bring in CDF combatants, individuals who had been members of other armed groups in the Sierra Leone civil war also gathered together. Sparrow provided the following explanation.

It was an open secret that LURD was mobilising combatants for its cause. We spread a rumour that anyone who wanted to take part should either go to the Brookfields Hotel or come to my house [By this point, Sparrow had been provided with his own house]. It wasn't just Kamajors who came. We also had people visiting who used to be RUF and AFRC.

LURD had garrisoned combatants in the Brookfields Hotel and was preparing to launch its uprising, but the plan had to be aborted before it could be implemented. This was due to the death of Maxwell Mitikishe Khobe, the Chief of Staff of the SLA. With his death, there was no one left in the government of Sierra Leone who supported the objective of LURD. After Khobe died, LURD continued with its plan to launch the rebellion using areas in Sierra Leone, until President Kabbah got wind of the plan. Kabbah refused to allow it, and he ordered the simultaneous capture of the LURD leadership and they were all arrested. Sparrow said that he visited the vice president in order to negotiate for their release. With the Vice-President's cooperation, he was able to get the LURD leaders released. However, LURD was still no longer permitted to operate from Sierra Leonean territory. That development resulted in the LURD leaders and the combatants they had gathered moving to Guinea. The plan to use Sierra Leone as Base One was thrown out and the focus was shifted to the combatants located in Guinea.

Because disarmament efforts in Sierra Leone began in earnest in July of 2000, LURD had to hurry in order to transport all of the combatants they had gathered.²¹⁶ The statement below was made by a former Kamajor who experienced the move to Conakry.

I was staying in Freetown as a part of the CDF. Sparrow had managed to acquire medicine and food from the government. I think he was looking after around 500 people.

(The following refers to after this individual joined LURD.)

Chief of Staff, Maxwell Khobe, was supposed to help us all get to Liberia. But then he ended up dying. That was when we had to go to Guinea [instead of heading directly for Liberia from Sierra Leonean territory]. We went to Guinea by the sea route and crossed to Conakry by Guinean army *pam-pam* [a Krio word meaning 'boat']. We waited in Conakry for around two months. While we were there, people kept coming to us from Sierra Leone. They were taken by the Guinean army to Macenta.²¹⁷

This was how the Liberian members of the CDF Special Forces and the Kamajors who volunteered to fight were taken by sea to Conakry. LURD attacked Liberia from Guinea before the end of 2000. Individuals from Sierra Leone also took part in that invasion. These combatants had experienced the continued disintegration of the CDF's PC network and, after taking the opportunity to get out while they could, we can say that they were attempting to step into a new PC network.

The Abandonment of the Brookfields Hotel

With the dismantling of the CDF, the number of Kamajors staying at the Brookfields Hotel was also dropping. Even after the civil war was officially declared over in January of 2002, Kamajors continued to live at the Brookfields Hotel. However, the inhabitants of the Brookfields Hotel were forcibly evicted in August 2002. Danny Hoffman had been conducting research at the Brookfields Hotel since 2000 and, in his book, he provided the following account (Here Hoffman is also referring to 2002, after the civil war was declared over).

By January the population of the hotel had dwindled markedly, but several hundred people still occupied the many yellowed hotel blocks and peripheral buildings. The rumors of an impending eviction had led most of the CDF elites living at the hotel to pack their belongings and

go. Charles Moiwo, the national public relations officer and a close ally to Hinga Norman, abandoned his air-conditioned room in ‘the Flats’ around Christmas. The CDF secretary of transport, whose black Mercedes sedan was a regular feature on the hotel grounds, had not been around in weeks. The rank-and-file combatants had begun to slip out of the hotel with little fanfare. Some embarked on the surreptitious journey across the Guinean border and on to the LURD rear base at Macenta. From there they entered the mercenary circuit in the push to overthrow Charles Taylor. Others headed to the still tense eastern diamond fields of Kono and Tongo. There they took up the dangerous work of mining and negotiating the complex identity of ‘ex-combatant’ with the former RUF boys who dug in the same open pits. The hotel was decidedly less populated than it had been earlier in the war. But it remained lively [...] In August 2002, a Nigerian contingent of the United Nations peacekeeping force made good on a long-standing threat to move the remaining CDF fighters from the hotel. For months before that day the fighters who could leave the hotel had done so. Those who still occupied the rooms were the most desperate. They threatened to burn the hotel down if forced to leave, or to violently stake their claim on the buildings and defend their position. As it happened, the eviction was relatively peaceful. When the Nigerian troop carriers pulled into the parking lot, the young men slipped out the back of the hotel compound and into the city streets. A few boarded a government bus that was to drive them out of the city and upcountry to Kenema or Bo. After nearly five years of occupation, the barracks at Brookfields disappeared and, apart from the graffiti and trash, there was no evidence that the kamajors had ever been there. (Hoffman 2011a: 183, 199–200. Some parts omitted by author)

Renovations were later done on the Brookfields Hotel and the buildings were put to use as office space for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Initiators Lose Their Influence as Patrons

The patrons who had been benefiting from the PC network known as the CDF attempted to maintain the status quo and their own positions even as the CDF was being dismantled.

By the second term of the Kabbah administration, the initiators had begun to lose the influence they had previously enjoyed as patrons. As previously mentioned, after the restoration of President Kabbah, CDF military operations began to be conducted under the auspices of the newly formed military wing and administrative wing. The independent units established under the initiators as part of the initiation wing were mobilised less often for battle. To the combatants, having fewer opportunities to take part in the fighting meant that there were fewer opportunities to obtain higher quality goods. Kamajors in units led by initiators left the initiators as they were no longer able to provide them with economic support or the chance to obtain such benefits on their own. Some began to search for a new patron to serve under, while others returned to civilian life.

Another thing that initiators lost was the chance to rally new Kamajors in their hand. Directly after President Kabbah returned to his post, they had continued to conduct initiation ceremonies and mobilise new Kamajor recruits. However, as the fighting of the civil war subsided, it became less and less necessary to bring in new Kamajors. The role of the initiator became limited to 're-initiation ceremony'. This re-initiation ceremony was performed on Kamajors who had already been initiated in order to reinforce any abilities that were being lost with the passage of time.

Kondewa came up with new ceremonies, one after another, in his attempt to acquire more money and cement relationships with his clients. Hoffman described the situation as follows.

The shortened version of the initiation which began to appear late in the evolution of the CDF, especially in late 1998 and 1999, was of a qualitatively different order from those versions that had come before. Allieu Kundewa began to initiate ever-larger groups of men into new organizations that promised certain advantages over the 'traditional' kamajor initiation. These new units required less vigorous screening, initiation, and restriction. They were also more expensive. Just before the 6 January 1999 offensive Kundewa began mass initiations in Bathurst, Bonthe District, and in the town of Bumpo, Bo District. An internal document estimated that five thousand to ten thousand new initiates paid some fifty thousand leones to become what Kundewa

called 'Avondos' drawing on the Mende term for sweat (the moisture of the Avondo's body was thought to be the locus of his bulletproof potency). Kundewa promised the Avondo initiates that their occult powers exceeded those of the 'original' kamajors, and he demarcated these initiates by piercing one of their ears. [...]

Kundewa's Avondo initiations angered both community leaders and the national leadership of the organization. Most saw the influx of hastily initiated youth in the same light as the periodic rapid conscriptions by the military – as a dilution of the ranks with untrained thugs who used their semilegitimate security position to prey on the local population. Kundewa was forced by the administrative leaders of the CDF to disband the Avondos and cease making claims to their extraoccult capabilities [...]

Although a smaller numerical force (probably no more than a few hundred), Kundewa's second independent mobilization was an even thornier issue for the CDF as a whole. In the wake of the 8 May 2000 incident, Kundewa began to initiate a unit in the Moyamba District called the Banya Moli, derived from a Mende expression meaning 'Don't ask me'. In this case he distinguished his new force through a red bandana or piece of cloth. As he had with the Avondos, Kundewa claimed that Banya Moli initiates possessed powers in excess of those of other kamajors ... Chiefs in the Moyamba District complained about Kundewa's arrogance and the lack of control over his new force, and the Banya Moli group was quickly shut down by the CDF leadership.

Kundewa's most interesting innovation in kamajor hale was the one that did the most to undermine his credibility both within and outside the CDF. Kundewa developed an initiation that he began to offer recruits – at quite a high price – which he called ngbogbegeboyeyi or 'it is finished' (also rendered as gbe gboyowa and kpeh gboryia, or roughly 'everything thing is finished'). Ngbogbegeboyeyi, Kundewa promised, would relieve the kamajor of any obligation whatsoever to observe restrictions on his behavior and would preclude ever needing a 'top up' initiation in the future [...]

Before ngbogbegeboyeyi became standard practice, however, Hinga Norman removed Kundewa as the kamajors' so-called High Priest. The man who represented the occult dimensions of the kamajors had become a liability, the subject of complaints by local leaders and ridicule

in the national press. Kundewa was implicated in the hijacking of a government truck and later in stealing a shipment of goods from a Lebanese merchant in Kenema. The man who replaced him, Lahai Bangura, brought an altogether different tone to the position. Literate, cosmopolitan, and unassertive, Bangura was unquestionably part of the CDF hierarchy. (Hoffman 2011a: 237–238. Excerpts arranged by author)

As the CDF was being dismantled around him, Allieu Kondewa continued to try and protect his own authority in the same way as he had done during his time at Base Zero – through the use of initiation ceremonies. However, Kondewa's attempts began to see less success as the civil war came to a close. Within the CDF, the initiation rituals had already come to be seen as unnecessary, and the role of the initiators shrank. As the environment around him changed, Kondewa could no longer maintain his position, and he was no longer able to play the role of a high-level patron within the CDF.

Samuel Hinga Norman Loses His Power

Samuel Hinga Norman's ability to bring individuals underneath him also disappeared as the civil war was brought to a conclusion. Up until that point, Norman had managed to keep a hold on the authority to issue arbitrary orders and use the CDF as he wished. However, the CDF was being dismantled and, in April of 2002, the doors of the CDF administrative offices were shut.

There was one body that continued to be mentioned by former members of the leadership who I interviewed about Norman's decreased influence. That body was the proposed Territorial Defence Force – or TDF – a unit that would be built out of a restructuring of the CDF. The International Crisis Group (ICG) non-governmental research and analysis organisation discussed the TDF proposition in one of its reports (ICG 2002b). According to that report, the TDF plan would result in the creation of a reserve security force with strength of 7,500 members that would serve as auxiliaries in support of the army and the police. The descriptions of the TDF provided by the former CDF leadership can be summarised as follows:

As the civil war was ending, a part of the CDF would be made to live on by restructuring into the TDF, and the plan was to try and keep maintenance of public order at the chiefdom and district levels. Meetings were held at the Brookfields Hotel, and the plan received the agreement of the main members of the CDF and President Kabbah. The plan was also supported by donors such as the United Kingdom and the United Nations. In fact, the British Army even carried out training exercises in preparation for the realisation of the TDF plan. There were already 3,300 uniforms prepared as well.²¹⁸

However, the plan was scrapped because Norman had already carried out military training with his civilian militia. Numerous individuals who had been a part of the CDF leadership structure described the situation to me in the same way, which I have summarised as follows:

Even though the civil war had already ended, Norman was still conducting military exercises with the Kamajors. He had them conducted in hiding in his own hometown of Mogerri (in the chiefdom of Valunia in Bo District). His dream was to become president, and he may have even been planning a coup d'état.

Because of Norman's actions, the idea for the formation of the TDF lost the support of the British Army and the plan apparently came to nothing.

What these events illustrate is that due to the civil war ending, Norman was no longer able to maintain his authority and continue to utilise the combatants of the CDF as arbitrarily as he wished. Among the people of Sierra Leone, Norman was celebrated as a hero who had protected them from the rebels. The average Kamajor also saw Norman as a god-like figure. However, among the CDF leadership, most held more negative opinions about Norman. It goes without saying, but Sparrow was included among those who looked upon Norman negatively.

The Sierra Leonean people showed great respect for Norman. But it was all a lie. All of us suffered because of Norman's desire for power.

He wanted to be president. The CDF suffered from Norman's desire for power. I am writing all of my own experiences in a book. In it, I talk about what Norman did. Because he was so obsessed with gaining power, the civil war was thrown into even more confusion. My plan is to expose just how selfish and power-hungry he was to the light of day.

As previously mentioned Sparrow broke from the CDF and joined the forces of LURD. That being said, Sparrow says that he remained in Sierra Leone and served LURD as a liaison. Because there was little obvious work for him to do, he started a new business with his good friend, Ibrahim Tucker (who had been the commander of the Gendema Kamajors). They founded a local NGO and opened a vocational training school as a subcontractor to the DDR effort. It was in this way that the two men found a new way to make a living after the end of the conflict.

In March 2003, Samuel Hinga Norman was arrested so he could be brought before the Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges. There are also rumours that this arrest was made in order for President Kabbah to eliminate Norman and his desire for greater power. Whatever the reason for his arrest, Norman's power disappeared with his arrest and indictment by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The national base commander, Mohammed Duai, says that he tried to start an uprising when Norman was arrested.

When Norman was being arrested, I went around to the senior officers of the CDF so I could elicit their support. Under the DDR programme, 214 officers were given a fixed amount and a house. Their lifestyles were all thanks to Norman's influence. But when I went to ask for their support, none of them paid me any attention. I realised that they were all accomplices.²¹⁹

Combatants would only follow the orders of their direct superiors. The only way to mobilise the CDF combatants to action was by issuing orders through a commander who had served directly over them in the past, and who was able to gather funding.

Mohammed Duai's attempt to gain their cooperation failed and he was unable to put his plan in motion.

When Norman was arrested, in order to avoid any backlash and violence from the CDF, apparently the agreement of the CDF leadership was sought out in advance. There were few individuals remaining who had any vested interest in the now dismantled CDF. That is apparently why there was no strong opposition to Norman's arrest. Even if Norman were to be arrested, they would have nothing particularly important to lose.

Samuel Hinga Norman passed away while undergoing medical treatment at a hospital in Senegal before the Special Court for Sierra Leone was able to pass a verdict. Norman's closest confidants, Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana, were also taken under arrest in May 2003. They had each found new places to live that were away from the CDF. Moinina Fofana had found a position as Speaker in Nongoba Bullum Chiefdom, while Allieu Kondewa had returned to working as a herbalist.²²⁰ Their arrests also robbed them of their newly built lives. Judgement on these two men has already been passed. Fofana was sentenced to 15 years in prison, while Kondewa was given a sentence of 20 years in prison. As of February 2015, these two men are serving the terms of their sentences in Rwanda.²²¹

* * *

The second term of the Kabbah administration became a turning point in the civil war being waged between the Kabbah government and the AFRC/RUF. The SLA had lost the majority of its military strength, so the Kabbah government's main strength lay with ECOMOG and CDF forces. In its conflict with the AFRC/RUF, the CDF had managed to establish itself as a government-backed armed force. The CDF had been used as a tool to maintain authority, not only by those in its highest positions, but by individuals at all levels of the organisation and it began to die a slow, lingering death. The points below summarise the information about this time period that we have been able to confirm:

1. The Base Zero PC network played a central role in the CDF at the time it was undergoing reorganisation. Those who took over central leadership positions and those who were placed in important roles at administrative offices throughout the country were those individuals who had been incorporated into Norman's PC network during his time at Base Zero. Beneath those individuals were ranked the Kamajors from the areas the offices were located in and the members of hunter militias from other ethnicities.

2. A CDF base was built in Freetown, and CDF combatants were stationed there. Those combatants were mobilised to take part in mopping up the AFRC/RUF and were utilised by Norman for his own personal uses.

3. The story of Sparrow's shooting illustrates for us that although the CDF had been organised as a government-backed armed force, the supply of provisions to units was still conducted by patrons and based in their own individual influence.

4. The peace-building process had been put back on track in 2000, and the civil war was gradually brought to an end. That development resulted in the members of the CDF leaving the organisation, one by one. In other words, these individuals were leaving the PC network known as the CDF. In contrast, as can be seen by the actions of Samuel Hinga Norman and Allieu Kondewa, there were still people trying to maintain their own authority using the logic in play during the civil war, even though the situation had changed.

Returning to the hypothesis of this book, the process presented in this chapter seems to have been one in which each PC network was integrated into the single dominant PC network, and that dominant network was then assembled into a government-backed armed group. However, as the civil war was brought to its end, the individuals who made up that PC network began to break away.

People Who Lived through the Civil War: The Life Histories of Three Kamajors

In Chapters 5 through 10, we took a closer look at the transformation seen within the Kamajors and the CDF. During the civil war in Sierra Leone, the Kamajors were integrated and re-formed as the Civil Defence Forces and the CDF was dismantled with the end of the civil war. From Chapter 8 onwards, we went into more detail about Sparrow's CDF Special Forces unit and, in doing so, illustrated how the Kamajors/CDF functioned as a PC network, and discussed how the PC network formulated therein was fluid in nature. However, we have not yet been able to provide a sufficiently clear understanding regarding the fluidity of the Kamajors/CDF PC network. The reason for this is because the CDF as an organisation was too big for us to get a good view of interpersonal relations on the individual level. In this chapter, I aim to address that issue by providing the life histories of three individuals.

In interviews, I asked each of these individuals to describe their lives. This chapter serves as the stage upon which I present the tales they told. Please keep in mind that, when putting these histories to page, I extracted and edited the portions in order to focus on information about the transformations seen in the Kamajors/CDF and the fluidity of the PC networks in place. In other words, I have rearranged each story to better illustrate the goal of my research: consideration of the transformations seen within the Kamajors/CDF. Therefore, the accounts below are not presented exactly as they were originally communicated to me.

Some of the experiences described here may differ from other interpretations of the events presented in Chapters 5 through 10. For a person's own life history, his or her individual experiences and interpretations of those experiences are obviously subjective in nature. I decided to present those histories in the way they were intended. In a way, it is an attempt to provide a depiction of the person's own subjective realities. While the narratives that appear in this chapter have been edited, there was no attempt made to distort the narratives through adding my own interpretations. There are parts which seem to be clear lies; there are parts

that seem to have been purposefully left vague; and there are parts that do not conform to what is factually known. All of these were faithfully recorded and presented here.

In Section 1, we reconfirm the characteristics of the PC network, at which point we delve into the individual life histories in Section 2.

1. The Function of PC Networks from the Perspective of the CDF Special Forces

The objective of presenting the life histories in this chapter is to show that the Kamajors/CDF functioned as a fluid PC network. For that reason, we should first present the characteristics of the PC network within the CDF Special Forces, which we looked at in some detail.

First, those who were able to obtain resources became patrons. In Chapter 8, we discussed the formation of the CDF Special Forces. Sparrow had received military training from an armed group in Liberia, although he had no actual experience in battle. Regardless, he was able to take command of the Special Forces. It can be said that the very reason Sparrow was able to take command of the Special Forces was because he was able to act as a distributor of CDF/Kamajors resources.

Second, PC networks are fluid in nature, and clients gather around patrons who have control of resources. As we showed in Chapter 10, the more resources Sparrow was able to control for distribution, the higher the number of combatants he was able to gather under his command. In addition, other Kamajor units began to show their loyalty to Sparrow. These facts demonstrate the fluidity of the PC network. Clients were able to freely choose their own patrons and patrons were able to secure client loyalty because they had the wherewithal to distribute resources.

Third, combatants were mobilised through personal connections. In Chapter 9, we discussed the attack on Freetown by the Kamajors/CDF. At that time, the CDF Special Forces absorbed many Kamajors. Many of them were related to combatants already in the CDF Special Forces, or they were already acquaintances. These sorts of connections were used to mobilise combatants to join the

Special Forces, and we can interpret these facts as showing how the combatants were incorporated into the PC network through the utilisation of a rhizomatic network of personal connections.

2. The Life Histories of Three Individuals

In this section, we use the life histories of three individuals to show how the essence of PC networks as described above was interwoven into the very fabric of the Kamajors/CDF as a whole.

Ibrahim Tucker: The leader of the Gendema Kamajors

The first individual presented here is Ibrahim Tucker, a former leader of the Gendema Kamajors. Tucker was born in 1977 in Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom in Bonthe District. His father was paramount chief of Nongoba Bullom. After the civil war broke out, this chiefdom was connected to the Kamajors group in Kale Village. In addition, this chiefdom is where Moinina Fofana took the role of Speaker after the civil war ended and before Fofana was arrested to be brought before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I was able to conduct two interviews with Tucker.²²² The narrative below is based on the information gathered through those two interviews:

In July 1991, the rebels came to my village and killed my father. My father was wealthy. The rebels wanted my father to give them his single-barrel gun. When my father refused, they said, 'We don't have enough time'. Then they killed him. I ran away into the bush and I reported the attack to the navy [the coast guard].

I later began working, and I would buy palm oil and then transport it to Freetown. But I was robbed in an ambush and I lost everything. I decided that I wouldn't try to do business anymore while the civil war was going. During the civil war, I was often stopped at checkpoints set up by the SLA. Whenever you went into RUF territory, the SLA soldiers looked like they would shoot you at any minute. There's no way to do business in that situation.

The rebel threat in Bonthe District increased again in around 1995. I was also mobilised [in Nongoba Bullum Chiefdom] and made the leader of an AG [an abbreviation of 'Action Group']. AGs were

vigilante groups that were made up of young people from a town or section. As time passed, AGs began to be made up of people from different chiefdoms as well. Each of the chiefdoms would appoint a chief Kamajor as leader and they were in charge of coordinating with the SLA. Whenever the SLA needed manpower, contact would be made by letter. People would be gathered in line with the instructions provided in the letter. I went out on two or three missions with the navy to hunt down rebels.

The rebels attacked our villages and drove us out. That made us join up with the Kamajors in Kale Village. In Kale Village, I took part in Saddam Sheriff's expedition and I went to Bo. I stayed in Bo for the time being. There was no way for me to get initiated while I was in Kale Village, so I did my initiation while I was in Bo. My initiator was Lahai Bangura. From around that time, I was one of the Kamajors who fought alongside the SLA in joint operations. Eddie [Massalay] was our commander. Eddie was the coordinator who worked with the SLA. I was the battlefield commander in command of those Kamajors. We were still operating with the SLA even at the time of the May 25 Coup. At that time, I was in Zimmi. We had a good relationship with the SLA, but the coup on 25 May caused a split between us and the army. We all moved to Gendema [...] In Gendema, I became commander of the first battalion. But, when Norman made his new base, I was made commander of the second battalion.

I never once went to Base Zero [even though his own chiefdom was taking part in operations with Base Zero]. I did land at Base Zero when we were carrying ECOMOG supplies by helicopter, but I absolutely never got out of the helicopter. We [the Gendema Kamajors] didn't have a good relationship with them [the Base Zero Kamajors]. I was worried that if I got out of the helicopter I would be killed.

We made sure the Gendema Kamajors were strictly organised. In contrast the Base Zero line of command was all in confusion. During the operation to recapture Freetown, Base Zero Kamajors arrived in Bo before we did. They were caught in a real struggle. It was all because we came that Bo was able to be captured.

After the capture of Freetown, I came down sick and spent a few months in a hospital in Freetown. I later moved to Zimmi. Sparrow

was also in Zimmi in his job as commander of the Special Forces. We were really close and we did everything together.

After disarmament, I was able to get some money in my hands. I used that money to found a local NGO that would help implement the DDR programme. My NGO received the approval of the United Nations. In Bo, we provided people with the training they needed to become motorcycle mechanics, carpenters, tailors and other things. Sparrow was also involved in the operation of the NGO.

From Tucker's experience, we get an understanding of the Kamajors who moved from group to group. After Tucker became a member of the hunter militia in the chiefdom of his birth, he was driven off by the rebels, whereupon he joined the Kamajors in Kale Village. These movements were not the result of Tucker making use of personal connections, but later on, Tucker began to move from unit to unit of his own volition. First, he took part in the expedition led by Saddam Sheriff and made his way to Bo. Next, while he was in Bo, he joined Eddie Massalay's Kamajor group and took part in joint operations with the SLA. Directly from there, he rose to take over as commander of the Gendema Kamajors, but he later left the CDF and operated an NGO until the conflict was over.

Albert Nallo: One of Commanders in Base Zero Kamajor

The second figure we look at is Albert Nallo. Nallo was a part of the Base Zero PC network, but he was later driven out to the periphery of that PC network. At the time I conducted my interview with him, Nallo was 57 years old. Comparatively speaking, he was elderly. He was born in Bo District, and when the civil war broke out in 1991, he was working as an agricultural extension officer in Kailahun District. He also testified before the Special Court for Sierra Leone and much of his testimony was covered in Chapter 9. This interview was conducted by myself on 8 October 2011 in Freetown.

When the civil war began, I was working as an agricultural extension officer in Kailahun District. After the rebels invaded, I lived alongside them for two months. At first, I sympathised with their cause, but I eventually began to realise that it was all a sham. The RUF ordered

people to give them all their diamonds and gold. They were also told to provide coffee, cacao, palm oil 'for the revolution'. I thought that was wrong, so I suggested to my wife that we should run away. We crossed into Guinea, then passed through Kono District and finally arrived in Bo. I started a business in trade in Bo. I bought dried fish and palm oil in the south (from Pujehun District and Bonthe District), then brought it to Bo. I even went to Kale Village. That was around the time that Saddam Sheriff had chased off the rebels, so there was no danger in the south. The rumours from the Kamajors in Kale Village spread like wildfire. I also told people in Bo about what I had heard in Kale Village, so I guess I was one of the reasons the rumours spread so far.

When the war took a turn for the worse, I decided to become a Kamajor too. I went back to the chiefdom I was born in and then was screened before becoming a Kamajor. It wasn't like you could choose your own initiator. You had to be recommended by your chief to become a Kamajor, so I went back to the chiefdom that I was originally from and had an interview for selection. [...] The chief chose Mama Munda [the initiator]. I didn't choose the initiator myself. But I knew her magic was powerful, so I had no problem with that choice. From that point on, I was a part of Mama Munda's unit.

After the May 25 Coup, Kamajors from the east began going to Gendema and Kamajors from the south began gathering in Talia. Moinina Fofana was appointed national director of war, and Norman was put on the board of the National Coordinating Committee, and the reorganisation was taking place. I would go to Gendema to pick up orders and would bring back news with me. Mama Munda had the idea that we should build a base somewhere around Bo. We went around Moyamba and Bo Districts to gather the personnel we needed.

But then we got an order from Norman telling all Kamajors to gather at Base Zero. I went to Base Zero along with two or three hundred other people. Mama Munda was too old to travel so she stayed behind. At the time, Tifun was called Base Zero, and both Norman and Kondewa were there. There was some trouble and Base Zero was quickly moved to Talia [...] In Talia, Norman made me deputy director of operations and director of operations for the southern province.

I was staying in Bo at the time of the attack on Freetown that ended up bringing President Kabbah back to Sierra Leone. I established an office there in Bo [This office would later become the administrative office for the area]. I continued to stay in Bo after President Kabbah returned.

One time, Norman came to me and said he had to talk. He ordered me to attack ECOMOG. I refused because I thought that was wrong. When I did that, Norman went around the administrative office and contacted the local commanders directly. He left us out of it. The office was circumvented and the orders to attack were delivered. I consulted with director of war Moinina Fofana, but he told me to stay where I was in Bo. After that, our rice ration decreased.

I was still in Bo after the DDR began. I had worked as a mediator with ECOMOG, so people knew who I was even after the civil war ended ... An American arrived and told me to testify in front of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I was supposed to be there for the defence [of Samuel Hinga Norman], but they guided me in my testimony and I ended up saying a lot more than I intended to [Chapter 9 covers how Nallo provided a large amount of testimony regarding human rights violations that took place at Base Zero]. The average Kamajor looked at Norman as if he was a hero. Because I said something against him, there was a chance I would be killed if I continued to stay in Bo. So, after I gave my testimony, I joined the witness protection programme and started living in Ghana. However, I didn't know anyone in Ghana. It was too lonely for me there. I'm now living in Kailahun District where I work in the lumber export business. Because Kailahun was under the control of the rebels, there aren't many Kamajors there. But even now, when I go to Bo, I can't walk outside at night. I think no one would be surprised if I ended up being murdered.

Looking at Nallo's story, we see that Nallo started off his life as a Kamajor in the unit commanded by Mama Munda. That unit was moved to Gendema, where it came under the command of Samuel Hinga Norman. When Norman later moved to Base Zero, he ordered the unit to follow and Mama Munda's group went to Base Zero. Nallo was one of them. Nallo was appointed to an important position

there. However, after the CDF was being restructured as a nationally-backed organisation, he refused to follow an order given by Norman. As a result of his refusal, he was no longer able to share in the distribution of resources. Even though he was a part of the dominant PC network, he had been pushed to a position somewhere on the periphery.

I met Nallo in Freetown. He had come from Kailahun District on purpose to meet up with me (Sparrow said that Nallo came because Sparrow ordered him to). I paid for Nallo's lodgings and his travel expenses (and provided a thank you gift of a few dozen dollars). Sparrow also secretly gave him some money.

My interview with Nallo took place on the terrace of the hotel in the evening. He spoke for hours about the CDF with a beer in hand. Before we knew it, we realised it was 11 pm (I was just recovering from a bout of malaria, and had finished the last of the medicine the previous night. I wasn't really fully recovered yet). In truth, Nallo was someone who could really talk. He left the impression of a nice uncle. He spoke for almost five hours, since I had 'come all this way, you may as well hear everything before you go home'. He also talked about the abuse suffered by the citizens, which he had also spoken of in his testimony before the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

The following day, Sparrow's brother came to visit Nallo while he was still in Freetown. Sparrow's brother living in the town of Bo was also involved in the lumber sales business. They spoke together on the terrace of the hotel. Sparrow's brother spoke to Nallo about his fears of retribution from former Kamajors, telling him that, 'The civil war is over. Even if you were to live in Bo, I don't think you need to worry about being persecuted anymore'. Sparrow's brother had come all the way to Freetown by car, and the two later spoke about starting a business together.

Abu Bakar Kamara

The final story we look at in this chapter is that of Abu Ba Kamara, who joined the CDF Special Forces with his own unit during the second term of the Kabbah administration. Kamara was born in 1978 and was between the ages of 17 and 18 when he joined the Kamajors. After the January 6 Invasion, he joined the Special

Forces under Sparrow, and brought along his own unit with him (This interview was conducted in Monrovia on 11 September 2012).

I was born in Gallines Perri Chiefdom and was raised by my mother and father. When I was four years old, I was left with a karamoko²²³ in Kpaka Chiefdom in Pujehun District. That was so I could learn about Islam. War first arrived where we were in 1991. The rebels wore green berets and wrapped palm fronds around their heads. When they entered a town, they gathered all the town's people together and said to them, 'We came here to overthrow the APC [the All People's Congress]'. Then they turned to the town chief and said, 'You are no longer the town chief, and then randomly selected another man who they made into the 'town commander'. If the man they selected refused to do it, they would kill him. I guess there was really no way for the person to not take the position. After that, the man would serve as an intermediary between the RUF and the people of the town.

At first, when the rebels came they didn't kill anyone. It wasn't until afterwards that they started killing people. There was a river running through town. Anyone who crossed that river was considered an enemy and was killed.

In 1992, there was a rumour that the SLA had recaptured a neighbouring town. People thought that they would soon arrive at our town, so they fled into the bush. I was farming and, since the farm was in the bush, I could stay there and live there. While I was in the bush the SLA chased away the rebels and was able to restore the previous town chief to his position. The rebels continued to appear often even afterwards. The SLA often would use people as guides to show them the way.

Many SLA soldiers arrived in March 1993. They ordered all of the people in town to leave because the rebels were attacking. We ended up going to Gondama Refugee Camp [located in the outskirts of the city of Bo]. We carried our clothes and the other things we needed on our heads, and walked there. It took more than one week to get there.

I lived at the refugee camp with my teacher [the karamoko], but in July 1995 he became sick and died. Then I went back to live with my mother and father, who were also living there in Gondama. I was there when the Gondama Refugee Camp was attacked in December 1994.

There was a bridge, and people rushed to cross it as they were trying to escape. People were falling from the bridge and falling from the riverbank. Many people died. The ECOMOG and SLA soldiers had gone to Bo to watch a show, so there were no security personnel there. The RUF withdrew that night.

It was about that time that many chiefdoms started to fight alongside the SLA. The people in Bonthe District began to form the Kamajor society. My friend and I decided to become Kamajors when we heard that rumour. First, we went to Gbandapi in Pujehun District [where Saddam Sheriff was]. However, they said to us, 'He's not here anymore. You have to go to Kale village'. So, we made our way from there to Kale Village.

In Kale, Saddam Sheriff, Allieu Kondewa and Mama Munda were all working together to do initiations. We were in the third group to go through the initiation ritual. Kondewa later moved to Tihun, and Saddam Sheriff went on his expedition to Bo. I ended up going with Saddam Sheriff to Bo. At that time, Ibrahim Tucker [who would later become second-in-command of the Gendema Kamajors] was with us. When we arrived in Bo, I lived with my mother and father in the Gondama Refugee Camp for a while.

After Saddam Sheriff came to Bo, he founded a shrine and started conducting initiations. Saddam Sheriff was the first initiator to perform the initiation rituals in Bo. Hinga Norman and the people from Telu were the first people to participate in the initiation rituals there in Bo. People from other chiefdoms also went through the ritual. I introduced Saddam Sheriff to some young men from Gallines Perri Chiefdom who were living in the camp, and I made them go through the initiation. They later took Gallines Perri Chiefdom back and returned to live there. Then I started to travel back and forth between Bo and Gallines Perri Chiefdom. In Bo, I was with Saddam Sheriff. I know that Hinga Norman often visited Saddam Sheriff's shrine.

Kamajors from many different chiefdoms took part in the strategic operation against Zogoda [RUF headquarters]. The operation was fought alongside the SLA. A company garrisoned in Daru marched with us [the Kamajors]. Around the time we returned from Zogoda, I heard that Saddam Sheriff had been killed after setting up a shrine in Kenema, and I ended up being with Mama Munda afterwards.

One time, we were advancing into Kailahun District with the SLA. We had moved from Pendembu and just arrived in Gehun when the SLA ordered us to return to Daru. When we arrived in Daru, the Kamajors were told to disband. We refused to do that, and escaped into the bush. We later heard from villagers that the Kabbah government was in exile and that the AFRC had established their own government. I tried to go back to my hometown in Pujehun, but I ended up meeting some other Kamajors on the way. They told me that the Kamajors were being reformed in Gendema, so I joined up with them and went to join the others in Gendema.

In Gendema, I was a district battlefield commander. It was my job to come up with strategies, figure out how many fighters would be needed and then report that all to B.C. Tucker [B.C. stands for 'battalion commander' and was used to refer to Ibrahim Tucker]. After we won back Freetown, I was stationed in Kenema and ended up wandering around in the front line areas. At the end of 1998 [shortly before the January 6 incident], it was decided that I would go to Freetown. That was around the time the Kamajors were getting organised in Jui to strike out at the junta forces, but the rebels attacked, and the Kamajors were scattered around the area. We reformed on Popper Hill and headed to Freetown to support the fighting there.

I served in the CDF Special Forces up until the time of the attacks in May 2000. The weapons Sparrow acquired from the SLA were new weapons to us. [...] After the disarmament in Freetown, I left the Brookfields Hotel and went to live with my mother, who had moved to Freetown.

As numerous changes were taking place within the Kamajors/CDF, Abu Bakar Kamara moved from group to group, changing the Kamajor groups he was affiliated with multiple times. First, he made his way to Kale Village, then participated in Saddam Sheriff's expedition and found himself going to Bo. From Bo, he joined a group of Kamajors that was fighting alongside the SLA in joint operations. After the May 25 incident, he joined the Gendema Kamajors, and when President Kabbah and his government were restored, he was garrisoned in Freetown, at which point he joined the CDF Special Forces. Kamara's experience serves to show us how the

individuals that made up a PC network tended to be essentially interchangeable. Many of the PC networks combined and integrated with each other, and as they did, Kamara managed to move through a variety of them.

* * *

In this chapter, we presented three histories that show us the lives of three different individuals. Throughout Chapters 5 to 10, we described the transformation that took place within the Kamajors/CDF as a whole. That transformation could be described as having taken place over the process of numerous smaller networks being integrated into a larger and larger network. The histories above illustrate how a combatant could then move from unit to unit within the organisation. We see therefore how fluidity with the PC network was able to be maintained as the network became more and more integrated.

Conclusion: Armed Groups as Human Networks

1. Verifying the Hypothesis

This book has confirmed the process by which the Kamajors, which were formed initially as separate units in individual chiefdoms, went through multiple mergers to turn into a single pro-government force, namely the CDF. To explain that transformation, a hypothesis was proposed arguing that as small PC networks formed and merged over and over with each other, they gradually converged to form a single massive PC network.

The Kamajors/CDF was a huge organisation, and it is therefore difficult to bring to light the individual relationships between people when looking at it as a whole. This book therefore has examined the Kamajors and CDF on two different levels. On the first level, it has considered the Kamajors/CDF in its entirety, and the second level describes the experiences of the CDF's Special Forces. By looking at the CDF Special Forces, I have tried to understand the interpersonal relationships that were not visible in the examination of the organisation as a whole due to scale being too large. In this section, I have split the inquiry up into these two levels to discuss the transformations in the Kamajors/CDF.

Discussion of Level One: An Overview of the Kamajors/CDF

The first level of discussion looks at the Kamajors/CDF as a whole, in other words, the PC network that was led by Samuel Hinga Norman. From this level, we can see how multiple small PC networks merged together to form a single large network. The patrons and clients at each stage changed over the course of this process. While going through successive changes in personnel, these smaller networks gradually coalesced into a single PC network.

The Kamajors were initially formed around individual chiefdoms, and the traditional power structures headed by the paramount chiefs

shouldered the roles of leadership. To look at it another way, the emergence of the PC networks was based on single chiefdoms. As the civil war turned into a long, drawn-out struggle, the Kamajors began to converge into groups that transcended individual chiefdoms. This signified the formation of what are in this book referred to as 'Kamajor groups'. The individuals who led these Kamajor groups were commanders who had distinguished themselves, like Eddie Massallay, or initiators like Brima Bangura. The PC networks based around chiefdoms were merged and reformed to become larger PC networks, and in the course of that transformation, the Kamajors moved away from being under the control of each chiefdom's paramount chief.

In the beginning, Hinga Norman was no more than a paramount chief leading the Kamajors of a single chiefdom. However, as a result of his appointment to the post of Deputy Minister of Defence during the time of the Kabbah government he was able to secure the position of leader of the Kamajors as whole. A number of different Kamajor groups attached to Hinga Norman as they received support and supplies from him. However, at the time of the First Kabbah administration, he was no more than someone who provided support to various Kamajor groups around the country. These groups were at this point operating independently and were not under his control.

Under the AFRC-led government, the Kamajors were gradually brought together under Hinga Norman with one shared cause, namely, to restore the Kabbah government to power and bring back democracy, and it was from around this time that the appellation CDF (Civil Defence Force) came to be used in order to emphasise the fact that they were fighting for the people of Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the Kamajor groups around the country made clear their opposition to the junta under the banner of this cause. In particular, the Kamajor groups that gathered in the border town of Gendema (the Gendema Kamajors) summoned Hinga Norman and received an offer from ECOMOG. Hinga Norman provided material supplies to Kamajor groups that came from all over Sierra Leone to the Liberian border to collect them and this led to the Gendema Kamajors becoming the dominant Kamajor group.

Hinga Norman later moved to Base Zero. He took supplies from ECOMOG meant for the Gendema Kamajors and began using the base as a distribution centre to divide them up among other Kamajor groups. The Base Zero Kamajors thus replaced the Gendema Kamajors at the heart of the Kamajor movement. After President Kabbah returned to power, the CDF was reorganised as a pro-government organisation as the Base Zero Kamajors became the core of the movement and other Kamajor groups came under the umbrella of their control.

Hinga Norman climbed to the top of the PC network without ever defining a clear chain of command as everyone labelled themselves a commander. Norman solidified his power by taking advantage of the lack of control and arbitrarily using Kamajor units.

This particular method of control closely resembles the political skills discussed by Chabal and Daloz. Using the concept of 'Disorder as a political tool', they pointed out that political actors in Africa seek to maximise their own benefits by making use of confusion, uncertainty and disorder. In turn, this behaviour invites all manner of confusion and amplifies the uncertainty (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Hinga Norman gained power by obtaining the resources necessary for the CDF's activities and distributing them as the war continued. However, when the civil war ended and the CDF could no longer be maintained, his subordinates left his control and the PC network that he had developed collapsed with the conclusion of hostilities.

After his work at Base Zero, the initiator Aliu Kondewah, who had worked as Norman's right-hand man, and Moinina Fofana, who was director of war, became Norman's direct clients and took on the work of distributing material resources. However, they were too close to Norman, and one possible interpretation for their arrests by the Special Court for Sierra Leone is that they were implicated with Hinga Norman when his power collapsed. They were unable to step down from the CDF's PC network, whereas other commanders were able to slip away from it one after another.

The hypothesis of this book – namely that the process by which the Kamajor transformed into the CDF can also be seen as a process in which multiple PC networks underwent a series of mergers and

gradually coagulated into a single PC network – may therefore be said to be largely valid.

Discussion of Level Two: The PC network Centred on Sparrow

The second level is the PC network of the CDF Special Forces that was headed by Sparrow, and this network may be regarded as one of the elements that comprised the Kamajors/CDF. By examining Sparrow's PC network characteristics of a PC network emerge that otherwise might not be visible when looking at the Kamajors/CDF as a whole.

Sparrow ended up taking part in the Gendema Kamajors' operations while he was living in Liberia during the time of the AFRC regime. He gathered some Liberian fighters and formed the Special Forces within the CDF. Ibrahim Jalloh (Second-in-command of the Special Forces Unit), who had been involved with the armed group ULIMO in Liberia, also came to lead the Liberian fighters in the Special Forces, and they gathered under his command.

The process by which they formed the Special Forces could be described as one in which a new PC network is put together by making use of a rhizomatic human network. The new network was headed by the figure who distributed resources to the network (Sparrow) and its existence was maintained by this distribution.

Sparrow was the 'Chairman' of the Special Forces and he held a higher position than Jalloh. Even though Jalloh had a wealth of military experience and brought with him lots of fighters, he was still placed under the relatively inexperienced Sparrow. Sparrow was able to outrank Jalloh because he was in a better position to distribute resources, which was an essential ability in order to become a patron. In spite of lacking the military experience of his subordinate Jalloh, he was able to offer his Special Forces material supplies provided by both ECOMOG and the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. It was for this reason that he managed to attain the paramount position within the PC network of the Special Forces.

Nevertheless, even while he headed the Special Forces as the patron of the Liberian combatants, he was also connected as a client to the network of the Gendema Kamajors. That is to say that the

CDF Special Forces were formed as part of the PC network that was led by Hinga Norman.

However, after Base Zero was established, Hinga Norman forced the Gendema Kamajors out to the peripheries of his PC network. Interestingly, though, he did not try to destroy the Gendema Kamajors as a rival or enemy, but rather he left them hanging high and dry – essentially neutralising them and ensuring they were neither active nor inactive. There was no change to their status even after Kabbah returned to power. Sparrow also survived on the peripheries of the PC network that Hinga Norman headed.

After the restoration of President Kabbah's government, the Sierra Leonean government tried to restrain Hinga Norman's desire for power, and it turned its attention to Sparrow. It began to use him as a means to mobilise the Kamajors without having to go through Hinga Norman. Using supplies and other resources obtained from the Sierra Leonean military, Sparrow was able to increase the number of people dependent upon him. It can be said that the Sierra Leonean government pushed for the reorganisation of the CDF's PC network by manipulating the flow of resources.

The combatants loyal to Sparrow also reveal how the network functioned. The Liberian fighters who were asked to join when the Special Forces was initially formed responded to the mobilisation in order to be included in the distribution of resources, and by doing so became part of a new PC network. As far as these Liberians were concerned, the Kamajors/CDF was a completely unknown entity, but in spite of this, they still joined up and took part in operations under Jalloh. The CDF's Special Forces brigade was brought together by Ibrahim Jalloh using his rhizomatic human network. This PC network evolved to join with the one headed by Hinga Norman. As people connected with each other through rhizomatic relationships, the process may be described as one in which a number of individuals who formerly had no point of contact came to see each other as members of the same PC network.

Even after the Special Forces were formed, they continued to absorb personnel. As the anthropologist Mats Utas says, the clients could freely choose their patron (Utas 2012). As Sparrow was able to pass on resources from the Sierra Leonean armed forces to the CDF,

combatants flocked to serve under him. In addition, Mohammed Maada Gleh, who took care of Sparrow and stayed on as his aide-de-camp, could be called a client who was looking for a new patron. Before coming under Sparrow's command, he served under a different commander, but it was when that officer was injured and had problems looking after his subordinates adequately that Maada started looking after Sparrow and became his aide-de-camp.

If the process by which Hinga Norman rose up to become the leader of the CDF (the first level) and Sparrow's experiences (the second level) are examined in combination, we can gain a comprehensive view of the Kamajors/CDF as a PC network.

2. Contribution to African Conflict Studies in Political Science

First, I will note what can be generalised from this study of two levels of a PC network as insights for political science. This book has discussed the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF while making use of information contained in prior studies that relates to networks of interpersonal relations and PC networks in particular.

First, the PC networks may be said to have risen up from rhizomatic networks of interpersonal relations. Individuals trying to deal with the civil war used their connections as a way of seeing their way through the difficult times, and this led to new PC networks taking shape. During the civil war, Kamajor PC networks emerged as a way for the people to protect themselves from the RUF's guerrilla fighting and looting by the Sierra Leone armed forces. At first, there were many of these small PC networks (networks based around a single chiefdom), but as they gradually merged and absorbed each other, they metamorphosed into a single force, namely the CDF. Along the way, the patrons and clients at each level continued to switch and change and the networks were continuously being reorganised.

Second, as the PC networks were forming, power struggles broke out among some of the patrons as they fought for resources. Researchers so far have argued that armed groups were formed when existing PC networks headed by political elites were reconstituted (cf. Takeuchi 2009). To put it another way, someone who was already

part of the political elite mobilised and armed members of the public. According to this view, it is thought that the framework for a PC network was already in place, and armed groups emerged by replacing members within the network. In contrast, this book describes a process in which the PC networks were formed during the civil war and a certain individual then climbed to the top as the leader of an armed group. In order to reach the top, he had to procure resources, skilfully distribute them and make his clients dependent upon him.

As new PC networks were being assembled, one patron might rise to become an even more high-ranking patron and bring even more clients to serve under him, while another might fail and end up serving under someone or be expelled from the network entirely. For example, Eddie used resources from ECOMOG to attain a dominant position, but the resources were then taken away from him by Hinga Norman and his rank dropped relative to that. Sparrow also rose up to become a patron on a level able to compete with Hinga Norman after being offered resources by the Sierra Leone government after it had lost patience with Norman. From here on, it can be said that the acquisition of resources became an essential part of any struggle for power within the PC networks.

Third, it was difficult for leaders to completely remove internal enemies and rivals from their own PC networks. Hinga Norman kept a number of 'yes men' close to him and solidified his power by giving them the authority to distribute resources. However, as typified by Sparrow's experience, Hinga Norman removed or marginalised potential competitors and those who did not follow his wishes. Nevertheless, it is difficult to purge every internal foe; when Sparrow was nearly assassinated, his friends demanded that he be taken to Freetown in a helicopter as he was in a critical condition. They threatened Hinga Norman by saying they would riot if he did not put Sparrow on a helicopter. This demonstrates that getting rid of internal enemies brought with it the danger of destabilising one's own PC network, and it was therefore more expedient to leave these threats alone. This is demonstrated by the fact that after the attempted assassination, Sparrow continued to serve as the co-administrator/Kamajor leader for the Pujehun District. Furthermore, the fact that Eddie of the Gendema Kamajors became the

Administrator for the Pujehun District shows that political rivals could not be completely removed.

Fourth, PC networks were reconstituted across national borders. Conventionally, analyses focusing on PC networks limited their discussions to within the borders of a single country. In contrast, this book makes clear that as these networks reformed and reorganised they transcended national borders. As a specific case to back up this claim, Liberian combatants were absorbed into the Kamajors/CDF as fighters in the CDF Special Forces. Sparrow, who lived in Liberia, became the patron of these Liberian fighters. Furthermore, it could be said that, via Sparrow, the Kamajors/CDF PC network transcended the national border. Afterwards, Sparrow was involved with the formation of LURD, an armed group in Liberia, and persuaded several Sierra Leonean fighters to participate. A PC network that was able to transcend national borders could play a useful role when setting up an armed organisation in a neighbouring country.

Among the more recent studies of armed conflicts in modern Africa, there are examples that focus on the question of civil war ties that go beyond borders (Boas and Dunn [eds] 2007; Salehyan 2009). The mechanism for these connections may well have its origin in networks of interpersonal relations that exist beyond the lines of state.

3. Contribution to Cultural and Social Anthropology

Descriptive Method: An Ethnography of Human Networks

In the introduction to this book, I wrote that it could be called ‘an ethnography of human networks’. When using ethnographical descriptions as a tool to portray various aspects of the present, the writer has to (1) set the subject of the research, (2) establish a perspective or perspectives to examine the subject and finally (3) determine the method of description that is appropriate for the research subject and chosen perspective. The subject of this book’s research is the Kamajors/CDF that rose to prominence during the Sierra Leone civil war. Its perspective is the transformation of the organisation; how the Kamajors were transformed into the CDF and

then disbanded. In order to describe this phenomenon, I focused on human networks and made use of narrative accounts.

In recent years, describing phenomena relating to globalisation, transnationalism and states has become an issue within anthropology. It has been pointed out that a clear division between the internal and the external obscures some phenomena and hinders a deeper understanding. Therefore, it is possible that there is a certain validity to focusing attention on human networks as a descriptive method. In general, ethnographies regard global influences and influences from a state as external. However, these influences are often induced by a certain individual or individuals and are not necessarily things that just happen to occur unconditionally from the outside. Positing human networks as the focus of this book would be useful as a way to discover the role played by individuals who brought in these external influences.

'Modernity of Witchcraft' Reconsidered

For a period of time, the argument of 'modernity of witchcraft' was on the rise in anthropology (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Geschiere 1997). Geschiere argues the rise of contemporary ideas and practices of witchcraft in Africa during the 1990s. According to him, these new types of witchcraft are responses to modern exigencies rather than lingering cultural custom. The case of the Kamajors/CDF clearly fits with the argument. However, examining the metamorphoses of the Kamajors/CDF, the aspects of 'modernity of witchcraft' in them are neither mysterious nor incomprehensible. Their 'witchcraft' stems from faith in daily lives and trivial practices of depending on supernatural power. When one is faced with problems, one has no choice but depending on one's existing knowledge. The faith of the Mende and supernatural powers of herbalists and Islamic intellectuals was one of them. People's repeating attempts to deal with immediate problems by using existing knowledge constructed the 'mysterious' and 'exotic' characteristics of the Kamajors/CDF. Given this perspective, to reconstruct the process how the 'modernity of witchcraft' had been reconstructed is the necessary task to understand the one. This task will

deconstruct the exoticity and mysteriousness in the phenomena of 'modernity of witchcraft'.

The Use of 'Artfulness' to Domesticate the Civil War

Within cultural anthropology (social anthropology), there is a lot of research that portrays the daily lives of the common people in ethnographies. Such ethnographies generally give a positive evaluation of people who go about their daily lives slipping by the law and avoiding institutions and systems, and instead making use of interpersonal relations to manage their lives. Mats Utas put forward a positive portrayal of former combatants from the First Liberian Civil War, describing how they cleverly managed to survive in Monrovia after the conflict while being involved in robbery and black-market dealings (Utas 2003, 2008). Matsuda Motoji, a Japanese ethnographer who did fieldwork in the Kangemi slum of Nairobi, described the way people lived their everyday lives as 'domesticating the city' (Matsuda 1996, 1998: 32). Ogawa Sayaka, who studied street traders selling second-hand clothing in Tanzania, describes their way of business, which includes cut-throat bargaining often accompanied by lying and deceit, as 'artfulness' of living in a city (Ogawa 2011).

I gained a similar impression regarding the Kamajors/CDF combatants over the course of my fieldwork. The fighters who joined the Special Forces crossed into Sierra Leone in order to put their combat skills to good use, and those who ended up serving under Sparrow chose him only after taking their own personal interests into account. The life histories they narrated to me revealed glimpses of young people with no money making full use of their 'artfulness of domesticating' the civil war in order to survive.

However, the combatants were not the only ones who used their 'artfulness' to 'domesticate' the civil war, as the leaders and higher-ranking commanders of the Kamajors/CDF could also be said to have 'domesticated' it. For me, there is little difference between Hinga Norman and the average combatant who used his wits to go from one patron to another. Hinga Norman attained higher positions by using his wits to secure resources, maintain his position and rise up to have even more power and resources. Hinga Norman and the other leaders of the Kamajors/CDF also slipped between the cracks

in the law, avoided institutions and systems and used human networks to deal with the circumstances they found themselves in. The only difference between them and normal combatants are their respective ranks.

Calling them ‘political elites’, lends a negative aspect to the image of these figures. As seen in discussions about neopatrimonial states and rhizome states, their actions are often talked about using terms such as corruption, cronyism or bad governance. They have been criticised for lacking in transparency or being part of a plot to plunder resources; however, what they are doing is no different from what the vast majority of people do in their everyday lives. Even though it is still accurate to say that the behaviour of the political elites made the civil war drag on longer, that behaviour is no different from what some anthropologists have admired.

4. Contribution to Research into the Sierra Leone Civil War

Next, based on information gained through my examination in this book, I will discuss several disputed points that have become the focus for discussion in research into the Sierra Leone civil war. As described in the introduction, research on the civil war generally focuses on examining the RUF, and as a consequence many of the interpretations of the conflict have been reached through this lens. In this section, by way of contrast to these arguments, I would like to put forward some views that my examination of the Kamajors/CDF has brought to light.

First, earlier studies have pointed out that the oppression of local residents by the traditional authorities was in some way connected to the civil war (Fanthorp 2001; Peters and Richards 1998, 2011; Richards 1996, 2005; Richards et al. 2004). Here, I would like to add my own opinion to these claims.

According to the existing view, it was thought that some young people were no longer able to stay in their villages because they were forced by the traditional authorities to perform community labour or pay unfair fines, and they were absorbed into the ranks of the RUF. On the other hand, a look at the Kamajors/CDF reveals paramount chiefs who took on leadership roles in order to protect the people

under their authority. How the people felt about their chiefs prior to the civil war is not well known (as the power of the chiefs was fairly arbitrary, their feelings probably varied from chieftdom to chieftdom), but surveys after the civil war did show that a certain amount of trust was placed with the chiefs by the local inhabitants (Fanthorp 2005; Manning 2009; Sawyer 2008). Even if the people's trust in their particular chief was low before the civil war, the traditional authority figures in the chieftdoms certainly appear to have regained that trust by taking on a leadership role during the civil war.

However, chiefs who were not trusted by the local inhabitants were weeded out and removed during the civil war. Prior to the conflict, the APC (All People's Congress) brought in people from the outside who were not from ruling family lines and established them as chiefs in order to strengthen their control over the chieftdoms (these new chiefs are called regent chiefs). It has been suggested that these chiefs did not care about the people under their authority and concentrated only on exploiting them (Fanthorp 2005). In the civil war, these corrupt chiefs feared being targeted for revenge by the people, and in some cases, they made requests to the central government for bodyguards and pistols in order to defend themselves (Keen 2005: 132). Chiefs who neglected their people were weeded out amid the confusion of the civil war, whereas those who were able to gain the trust of the chieftdom's inhabitants were able to regain their authority. This course of events can be seen as being a direct product of the civil war.

The second point concerns the excessive brutality that was witnessed during the Sierra Leonean conflict. As mentioned in the introduction, the civil war has become infamous for the excessive acts of cruelty that were carried out against civilians, and there have been several explanations put forward for this in previous studies. Richards sees the violence by the RUF as a strategy to enable them to achieve their goals (Richards 1996). Abdullah believes it was a consequence of urban-dwelling young people, who were without roots and steeped in the drug culture, turning violent (Abdullah 1998; Abdullah ed. 2004). Keen argued that oppressed young people carried out acts of excessive violence on their former oppressors in order to show off what they were capable of (Keen 2005: 60–62).

Furthermore, Ochiai detected elements of anti-establishmentarianism from Rastafarianism in the violence by the RUF (Ochiai 2003a, 2003b). According to the teachings of Rastafarianism, which originated in Jamaica, the general Jamaican populace was being brainwashed by the Establishment. Brainwashed people were considered to be fools who were so far gone as to completely forget that they themselves were oppressed black people, and they were seen as traitors who not only made no attempt to fight the system, but actively tried to cooperate with it (Ochiai 2003a). As this way of thinking had become well entrenched among young people in Sierra Leone through Reggae music, Ochiai argues that the brutality of the RUF combatants may have been a result of them regarding normal civilians as traitors who were collaborating with the government.

In addition to these explanations for the brutality, I would like to point out that certain geographical characteristics intensified the violence of the Sierra Leone civil war. During the conflict, bush paths were used for moving around during the fighting, and as a result the areas controlled by each of the different factions were quite confused. There were no clear lines from one spot to another delineating the area controlled by one particular side. Furthermore, by using the bush paths skilfully, combatants could come and go without being seen by other people. Consequently, each warring group strictly prohibited civilians from making contact with other factions and ruthlessly enforced this ban. This was because for the fighters in the civil war an intrusion by enemy forces into their area of control would be a threat to their very lives. To put it another way, in the Sierra Leone civil war, the factions involved in the fighting had to be highly suspicious of civilians due to the rather unusual fact that the areas controlled by each group were so intermingled. There was a pressing demand for each side to try as much as possible to control the movement of people – an almost impossible task – and it may be that the violence acted out on civilians by the combatants become endemic as a result. Due to having little in the way of regional ties, it was particularly difficult for RUF combatants to obtain information from local inhabitants, unlike the Kamajors/CDF which had strong bonds to the land in which it was operating. This may have made the

RUF even more suspicious of the local people and led them to resorting to more heavy-handed violence.

Third, I would like to draw attention to the fact that there were quite a number of young people who managed to raise their social status due to the civil war. Many young men served with the Kamajors/CDF, and during the civil war they enjoyed a higher social rank as a result of their activities with the Kamajors. A lot of them managed to maintain that enhanced status even after the war was brought to a close, and it may be said that they fought for and won that status through their abilities. To discuss this issue in more detail, let us first look at studies of the RUF.

As an anthropologist who has researched the RUF, Richards claims that internally the RUF was a meritocracy (Richards 2002). As I described earlier in this book, any individual in Sierra Leone is always being taken care of by someone, and an individual's social status is determined by whom he or she is dependent upon; a form of cronyism, so to speak. By way of a counter to that, the RUF proclaimed equality and meritocracy, and claimed to have achieved that within its armed forces, and it has been argued that it led to capable young men going on to become RUF commanders (Fithen and Richards 2005; Richards 2002). Peters also puts forward the same opinion:

The RUF, for instance, presented a totally different system [to the conventional one] where position and promotion were foremost depending on fighting and commanding skills and dedication to the movement. The result was that young commanders were in control of fellow fighters and civilians who might easily be double or triple their own age. In fact, it presented a system in which promotion depended not on age or economic resources or 'who you know' but on 'what you can do'. In other words, it was a system based much more on principles of merit rather than on patrimonial and nepotistic ones. This aspect must have been particularly attractive to many young and marginalized people. (Peters 2004: 27)

This meritocracy was not unusual in the Kamajors/CDF either. The Kamajors were undoubtedly formed under the auspices of the

traditional power structure, but within the Kamajor groups it was the young men who fulfilled the actual working roles, and some of these men went on to rise up to positions of command within the Kamajors. There were many young men among the leaders of the Gendema Kamajors who were born in the early the 1970s and were in their twenties by the time of the civil war. Even though Eddie was elderly, Tucker, Moalem Shuahibu Sherriff and Sparrow were all in their mid-twenties at the time of the AFRC administration. In addition to these three, there were many other Kamajor commanders in their twenties during the civil war. It may be said that like the RUF, the Kamajors/CDF gave young people an egalitarian opportunity to work.

One thing that made a particular impression on me during the course of my fieldwork in Sierra Leone was that many of the people who were former leaders of Kamajors/CDF spoke with such clarity and logic. From the questions I asked them, they were able to perceive how much I knew about the civil war and Sierra Leone, accurately ascertain what I wanted to know and then explain that to me in a logically consistent way that I could understand. That I gained this impression of Kamajors/CDF leadership being so intelligent could perhaps in itself be called proof that the organisation functioned as a meritocracy.

However, where the Kamajors/CDF was different from the RUF was that many Kamajors at the leadership level came from families that were part of the traditional structure of power. The leaders themselves assert that the Kamajors/CDF was a meritocracy. However, a certain amount of education and experience is necessary in order to communicate in English and to hold meetings and discussions. Furthermore, if a man belongs to a lineage from within the leadership class, it creates the expectation in others that he might behave as a leader. Perhaps these young people were able to join and thrive in the meritocratic society of the Kamajors/CDF because they came from families within the traditional structures of power and had received a certain degree of education.

Some of the people who clawed their way up in the Kamajors/CDF also made the jump into politics after the civil war, becoming members of the district councils and even the national

parliament²²⁴ (by comparison, the former commanders of the RUF struggled to be rehabilitated into society). The people who played significant roles within the Kamajors were supported by the local residents, and they used that to make the transition into the world of politics. In that sense, the Sierra Leone civil war and the organisation of the Kamajors/CDF can be seen as promoting the rise of the younger new generation within the ruling lineages and traditional power structures.

5. Potential Issues with This Book

Finally, I would like to note down some of the problems with the research in this book. Needless to say, I wrote it while being aware of these issues.

First, the account put forward in this book was of course written after the events it describes took place. It explains the transformation of the Kamajors/CDF as a process in which multiple Kamajors converged and blended to form a single force. At the heart of this account are the people who ultimately became the leaders of the CDF. However, Hinga Norman, Kondewah and other later key individuals were not central figures in the Kamajors at the beginning. I was of course aware that Norman, Kondewah and Fofana ended up forming the upper tier of the CDF. Therefore, the descriptive method of this book, which explains the process by which they emerged, is based on my hindsight. There is little doubt that this method of describing the process means that developments within the Kamajors/CDF that were unrelated to these key figures have been overlooked.

Second, I have focused too heavily on three of the individuals who were prosecuted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. This book has brought to light the process by which the three men became high-level patrons, and the reason for choosing them as the subjects for my study is because their prosecution by the Special Court for Sierra Leone clearly shows that they occupied high positions within the CDF. However, they did not all attain the highest positions in the CDF. There can be little doubt that Hinga Norman did reach the top, but the other two, Kondewa and Fofana, are not necessarily in the second or third positions. There were other figures who dominated

the highest positions in the Kamajor/CDF, but who were not prosecuted by the Special Court. Delineating the process by which Kondewa and Fofana made their way up to their positions as patrons is just a way of showing two examples of how high-ranking patrons emerged.

Third, there is also a gender problem. The book mainly discusses combatants in the Kamajors/CDF of which 97 per cent were male, so my interviews were mostly done with men. On the other hand, they had families, wives or girlfriends; I heard stories of women doing the cooking and cleaning on the home front, but I admit to not digging sufficiently into these.²²⁵

6. Future Research Goals

From the discussion of the Sierra Leone civil war in this book, it can be seen that the conflict was heavily swayed by the First Liberian Civil War (1989–96) and the second Liberian civil war (2000–03). As I have focused on Sierra Leone, it can perhaps be said that there is insufficient analysis of the mutual effect Sierra Leone and Liberia had on each other. In future, a good look needs to be taken at how the civil wars in the two countries influenced each other.

Influence from neighbouring countries that becomes evident during a civil war is not just a problem limited to Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Africa in the 1990s, several large-scale armed conflicts broke out that caught the attention of the international community. Several regions saw a series of conflicts occur, as war in one country triggered fighting in a different country nearby, and these civil wars turned into large-scale, long drawn out conflicts. The influence these civil wars had on each other appears to play in the background of these disputes. In many cases, the armed factions involved in the fighting were formed with assistance from the government or armed groups in neighbouring countries, or from the expatriate community there, and they rose up in a rebellion that transcended international borders (assistance may take the form of material goods and funds, as well as the mobilisation of fighters and permission to use territory in the neighbouring country). Furthermore, many armed factions continued to use the neighbouring countries for routes to procure

materials or as military bases. Demonstrating how the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia were intertwined will also lead to understanding the domino effect of civil wars observed in Africa.

7. Ethical Issues Raised by this Book

This book has provided an interpretation for the process of the civil war in Sierra Leone. Proposing this interpretation makes a contribution to fixing the framework of understanding the war. The anthropologist, Okazaki Akira, saw the work of applying explanations and interpretations to civil wars – as I have done in this book – as problematic. According to Okazaki research into rebellions or attempts to resolve civil wars inadvertently create a certain established ‘reality’ of war. He argues that civil wars might be random and chaotic acts in nature and to talk about a ‘civil war’ or to make attempts to resolve the ‘war’ lends credence to the notion that a war is actually taking place (Okazaki 2010: 311). He goes on to assert that studying and providing explanations for a war even works to further that conflict.

Those involved in a conflict [...] regardless of what their personal motivations may be at its outset, gradually begin to ‘act’ out the roles that are clearly laid out in a schema [...] that has been brought in from the outside. The reason for this is that these players notice the potential to obtain various benefits from outside aid groups, such as weapons and funds to support their livelihoods, or assistance to escape overseas or funds to study abroad. By adopting a schematic of confrontation [which has been brought to them from the outside and which is applied to the conflict they are involved in], those who most clearly embody it come to take the leadership roles in the conflict. (Okazaki 2010: 309)

Describing war certainly brings with it the sort of negative effects that Okazaki pointed out.

Nevertheless, Okazaki’s claim can surely only be applied to civil wars that are ongoing, whereas the Sierra Leone civil war is over. I believe that for a civil war that has ended, it is necessary to understand it and try as much as possible to think about exactly what

it was. To use a rather well-worn phrase, humans can learn not only from experience but also from history. To learn from history, it is necessary to document it and it can be said that adding interpretation is an essential task in the process of documenting history.

I would like to let it be known here that I added my interpretations while under the influence of the values of some of the people who were formerly in the Kamajors/CDF. This book was pieced together based on interviews with former members of the Kamajors/CDF and it therefore is affected by their value systems. It is quite possible that this research speaks only for the opinions and perspectives of the civil war of only a handful of people from the many in Sierra Leone who actually experienced it. In particular, I made contact with a lot of combatants who served in the Gendema Kamajors, thus the account in this book is somewhat skewed towards them.

For a researcher, being aware of conflict brings with it a certain hardship. Iwata Masayuki, an economist who also combined his research with fieldwork relating to the Yugoslavian conflict, wrote the following in regard to the difficulties of perception when researching war.

Awareness of a conflict is easily swayed by the perceiver's like – or dislike – of people, ethnic groups, and the society caught up in the conflict, as well as by the degree of religious and cultural intimacy, a fact which makes that perception liable to be one-sided. In the case of the tragedy in the former Yugoslavia, when I read the literature (newspapers, magazines, and books) from the Serbian side (or the Croatian side, for that matter), I am moved by the claims they make as they have a certain degree of persuasiveness. This leads me to empathize with them, and consequently any literature that goes in a different direction from this becomes psychologically difficult to read. When this happens, I scold myself and switch to reading literature from the Croatian side (or Serbian, as the case may be). (Iwata 1999: 21–22)

Iwata's assertion is quite reasonable. However, on-the-ground fieldwork is not the same as studying the literature. When undertaking fieldwork, the researcher selects the area and target for

study, and is forced to meet the subjects of the study face to face. He or she cannot simply switch his or her relationships from one person to another (Kurimoto 2001: 116).

To make my research possible, I kept company with former combatants from the Kamajors/CDF and listened to their stories. Over the course of this study, I began to empathise favourably with combatants who had surely performed some barbaric acts. As an anthropologist who examined the political violence in Argentina, Antonius Robben wrote that as he carried out interviews with the military-related personnel who were involved in torture and extrajudicial executions, he began to feel a certain type of warm empathy to the perpetrators (Robben 1996). I can understand how he felt. The former combatants who are now going about their lives after the civil war are normal people. Whenever I returned there for fieldwork after a long time away, they welcomed me back; sometimes they even spent several dollars to call me on my cell phone when I was living in Japan. To put it another way, just as a normal anthropologist makes contact with people in the area of study, I was connecting with former combatants who had possibly committed acts of extreme cruelty.

I undertook my fieldwork while fully aware that there were certain areas those involved in the Kamajors/CDF did not want to talk about. It is reported that severed heads were lined up on display at several of the checkpoints set up by the Kamajors/CDF and the people who welcomed me whenever I arrived on the ground for fieldwork would probably have seen them (and may have even been involved in the executions).

Naturally, the former combatants were not keen to talk about any brutal acts or abuses of human rights that they might have participated in. Asking about things the subject does not want to talk about violates fieldwork ethics (and might mean that the subject no longer responds to the investigation). I decided to ask about any negative aspects only to people with whom I had built a relationship of trust (or at least people with whom I thought I had developed such a relationship), but of course, they were loath to speak out on such matters. The claim can certainly be made that this book does not shine sufficient light on the negative aspects of the Kamajors/CDF.

8. Finally

I began this study in 2007, five years after the conclusion of the civil war in Sierra Leone. The hearings by the Special Court for Sierra Leone were mostly finished by this point and it is quite probable that the reason so many people responded to my requests for interviews was because the timing dovetailed with conclusion of the trials. In other words, there was no fear of being indicted again based on what they talked about with me. I was able to gather the accounts of many people in interviews over the course of my fieldwork and, depending on the person, I was told many things that I could not write about here. Some of those people included politicians. Writing down certain things I was told might endanger the political lives of these individuals and I have decided not to include them in this book.

Again, depending on the person, some of the narrators possibly wanted to leave behind their own mark on history. Some may have found it easier to talk to me as I was an uninvolved third party (and moreover a foreigner). Also, when I met people through Sparrow, they may have felt that they could talk to me and not suffer any negative consequences because I had been introduced through their old comrade-in-arms. Whatever the motivation, some people told me a lot. This book is the product of their combined narratives.

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I am indebted to a great number of individuals who provided me with the guidance and advice I needed over the course of my research. Professor Masako Ishii, who was chief examiner for my doctoral thesis examination, taught me how to feel close to the subjects of my research. When she speaks to people about her fieldwork, she always seems to speak from the point of view of the people she is researching – she stands in their shoes, so to speak. In addition, I found that she had a very warm attitude when she dealt with her students. I think that in meeting her, I met someone who was truly a good educator. I also owe much to Professor Eisei Kurimoto, who aided me in ways both personal and official. Through his guidance in regard to my research, he taught me what I must be careful of when writing works in the field of ethnography. In addition, learning about Professor Kurimoto's views on human society was also very helpful for me. Professor Kurimoto has a very sharp eye. When he walks through a town, he turns his gaze to various things that remain. Once, we went for a stroll after a conference in Hiroshima and, as we walked, he pointed out the shapes of the tiles and the buildings, and how the roads were made. He showed me how items like those tell the history of a neighbourhood. During my time as a student and throughout my research, Professor Kurimoto taught me the perspective I would need, and what I should pay attention to while working in the field.

Professor Yasuhide Nakamura, even though he worked in a different field than the one I was studying, took over as my dissertation advisor for a period. His becoming my advisor was an emergency measure made necessary by my own teaching advisor having transferred to a different institution, but regardless, he encouraged me from the moment we met, and provided me with advice when I presented my research. I was buried in my own research, but Professor Nakamura provided me with fresh insight and advice that was possible because of the differences in the issues we were interested in. Meeting him was a very positive and beneficial experience for me. From Professor Yoichi Mine, I learned the importance of studying up on prior research. I learned much from

his guidance about how to read into and organise the ideas of people who have conducted previous research in the field.

In addition to the above, I would also like to express my thanks to a number of other individuals: Professor Shinichi Takeuchi (of the Institute of Developing Economies at the Japan External Trade Association) for the advice he provided each time I presented at a research seminar; Professor Takehiko Ochiai (Ryukoku University), who allowed me to speak to him when I was worried about whether to continue my studies, and even afterwards, when he continued to provide me with regular learning opportunities; Professor Katsuhiko Mori (International Christian University), who hammered into me the importance of the research method during my master's studies; and Kazuo Takahashi, who during my master's studies taught me the attitude needed to be an intellectual who can be active on the global stage. Professor Mori taught me methods of analysing international politics that are applicable throughout the social sciences, and those methods have become the foundation upon which my research is based. There are countless other professors whom I have not been able to thank here in writing yet who provided me with invaluable advice, and many students with whom I was fortunate enough to strike up friendships during our time studying together.

In the publication of this book, I was aided by Ms. Kumiko Matsui and the other staff at Showado, who helped bring the book to a state that was endurable for the reader (providing advice on making it easier to read). It was entirely through their hard work that my manuscript – full of incorrectly entered characters (and other problems) – was able to be published. (I'm sorry for my awful handwriting!)

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This opportunity to look back on my time thus far has shown me just how many people have supported me in my life as a researcher. I would like to thank each and every one of you, and to thank all of the readers who managed to make it this far.

Normally, the final line of the acknowledgements section is dedicated to addressing a message to one’s spouse and children, but unfortunately, I have not yet been so fortunate as to have been provided with such an opportunity. I would, however, like to take this chance to express my gratitude to a certain person.

5 January 2015
Kyōto

Endnotes

¹ Taking the figures for just January 1999 alone, at least 97 people received treatment at the three main hospitals in western Freetown for amputations carried out by the RUF (Ochiai 2003b 343; Human Rights Watch 1999).

² Figure 1-1 only shows the distribution trends among the ethnic groups, which means that there are in fact areas where different groups are intermingled. Also, the Mandingo and Fullah are scattered all over Sierra Leone as in the past they traded over long distances and settled in the areas they visited.

³ A creole is a simplified language that was used between people with different native tongues in order to understand each other, and which then spread throughout that particular society to become the common language or mother tongue.

⁴ For a discussion of English in Sierra Leone, see Johnson (1986).

⁵ The Mende language belongs to the Western Mandé group of the Mandé branch in the Niger-Congo language family

⁶ In addition to the farm bush, there are also areas where tropical rainforests grow as well as several mangrove swamps.

⁷ The populations of the towns and cities has grown due to influx of displaced persons during the civil war and increased urbanisation afterwards. According to estimates in 2003 after the conflict was over, the population of Koidu City had mushroomed to 113,000 and that of Makeni City to 110,700 (Heath 2005). Moreover, many towns and villages temporarily disappeared during the war as the people abandoned them.

⁸ The economy relies heavily not on diamonds alone, but other products of primary industry. Other key industries besides diamonds are bauxite, iron ore and rutile (one of the ores in metal titanium) extraction. Major economic agricultural activities include the cultivation of cacao, coffee trees and oil palms (Nakamura 1989).

⁹ The military force of Sierra Leone is called the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), and the land force of the RSLAF is called Sierra Leone Army (SLA).

¹⁰ *Kamajoi* is the singular form and the plural is *Kamajorsia* (Hoffman 2011a: 63).

¹¹ The distinction between ‘war Kamajor’ and ‘hunter Kamajor’ is made here for the sake of the analysis. However, one Kamajor used the two terms when explaining the situation during the war to me.

¹² This was officially called the Sierra Leone Battalion, Royal West African Frontier Force.

¹³ ECOWAS was founded in 1975 as a regional economic organisation aimed at forming a common market and customs union. There were originally 15 member states, including Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Since the First Liberian Civil War, ECOWAS had also engaged in various activities related to military security, including the dispatch of peace-keeping forces.

¹⁴ ECOMOG had not been formally sent to Sierra Leone while the AFRC regime was in power, but rather the Nigerian military had used the name ECOMOG without the agreement of the other members of ECOWAS. It was only after the return of President Kabbah that ECOMOG was officially dispatched to Sierra Leone with the agreement of the ECOWAS member states.

¹⁵ The hunting methods of the hunter Kamajors described here are different from those normally adopted by the Mende. Small-scale farmers among the Mende generally hunt for food as well (they engage in hunter/gathering as well as farming). However, they hunt in groups with their neighbours and use traps or dogs and nets.

¹⁶ Heard during the author’s fieldwork.

¹⁷ The number of hunter Kamajors is extremely small, with maybe just a handful in each chiefdom (chiefdoms are described in more detail later). They therefore made up only a tiny proportion of the hunter militias. For example, during my fieldwork in 2012, I heard that there were currently only three hunter Kamajors in the Malema Chiefdom in the Kailahun District. The people did say that there used to be more, but even then they said that there had still been no more than ‘several’.

¹⁸ In both English and Krio, this person is called an initiator, but in the Mende language the term ‘Karamoko’ is used. Karamoko are discussed later.

¹⁹ Gbethi was a self-defence force that was formed after the Kapra to reinforce it.

²⁰ Around 50 per cent of the vigilante forces were Mende, but nearly 50 per cent of the RUF was also Mende (Humphrey and Weinstein 2004). The RUF gathered troops through kidnapping and forced drafts, and many

Mende were caught up by this. The reason why the number of Mende was so high in both the RUF and the vigilante organisations is because the fiercest fighting of the civil war took place in the Mende land.

²¹ As will be described later, there were hunter militias in which women were active; the Tamaboro of the Kuranko people was famous for having women in it (see Chapter 5).

²² This definition is proposed by the author based on the argument of Ochiai (2001a: 51–52).

²³ The ‘big man’ concept was classified by Marshall Sahlins, an anthropologist who conducted research across Oceania (Sahlins 1963: 289; Utas 2012: 6), and it was Médard who applied it clearly to African political studies (Médard cited in Utas 2012: 7). Utas advanced the argument beyond Médard’s original discussion.

²⁴ However, the trio was not the most influential of the figures in the CDF. Rather, I have chosen them as examples in this book because they were clearly within the upper echelons of the organisation.

²⁵ Sparrow is writing his autobiography and he believes that getting word of his experiences out to a wider audience will lead to his work being published. This was why he let me introduce his story here.

²⁶ For the people of Sierra Leone, the place where they are from and the place where they were born are different. For some people, where they are from does not refer to their birthplace but to their father’s birthplace. Thus, in response to the question, ‘Where are you from?’ they may answer with their father’s place of birth, whereas to the question, ‘Where were you born?’ they will reply with the place where they were actually born. Incidentally, if someone’s mother and father are from different ethnic groups, that person will belong to the same group as the father. However, identification with a particular ethnic group is fluid, and there are times when a person will identify with his or her mother’s ethnic group. For example, there was one Kamajor I interviewed whose father was a Sherbro and his mother was a Mende. At first, he said he was a Mende (probably because I was researching the Kamajors). Later, as I spent more time with him, the conversation would sometimes come around to ethnic groups. Normally he would say ‘We Mende ...’ referring to himself, but sometimes he would say, ‘We Sherbro ...’.

²⁷ This way of selecting samples can also be called an opportunistic survey method. For more details regarding this method, see Sakurai (2002: 25).

²⁸ I used Mikuriya (2002) for reference regarding this technique. In the case of Japan, interview surveys for the purpose of uncovering the facts become more in advanced in the field of research that focuses on Japan's political history (Egashira 2007). Mikuriya and Ito, who have studied the politics of modern Japan, have written several works discussing the techniques of oral history (Ito 2007, Mikuriya 2002). They posited that interview surveys could be used as a method to shine a light on aspects of the policy-making process that cannot be gathered from official documents. That is to say, scholars of modern Japanese history use interviews to grasp the facts that cannot be garnered from written sources. In the research for this book, while written sources were limited, I referenced how Ito and Mikuriya treated information from oral sources and how they proceeded with their research.

²⁹ For a critical discussion of information from oral sources, see the following studies: Ishii (2002), Ito (2007).

³⁰ A friend of mine once pointed the following out to me: 'Hideyuki, when you explain something, you always try to explain more than two aspects of it at the same time. Remember just the other day when you were recommending a movie to me? When you were telling me how good the movie was, you were trying to tell me all at once that the changes in the hero's emotions were good, that the story was full of surprises and that the cinematography was beautiful. All at the same time. But you've only got one mouth. You just can't explain everything altogether at once. It's impossible'. My friend is far removed from academia, but I found myself nodding at his assessment.

³¹ During fieldwork in Sierra Leone from October to December, 2009, I met several journalists and former leaders of the armed factions. At the time, I brought with me a copy of the TRC Report and many of the people I spoke with said that for the most part it was a reliable document. However, it was also pointed out that there were some mistakes and bias with regard to the finer points and some of its interpretations.

³² The International Criminal Court was established in 2003.

³³ The job title ‘speaker’ is derived from the historical practice of the person in this role being used to pass on the orders of the chief (Little 1965: 197).

³⁴ Ochiai has presented a number of discussions in Japanese on the chiefdoms as a form of government (see Ochiai 2007, 2008, 2011a). The Japanese vocabulary used in this book builds upon Ochiai’s work. When Ochiai uses the terms ‘chiefdom’ and ‘paramount chief’ in relation to the chieftaincy system, he presents them in *katakana* (in line with the English pronunciation of the words), and this book utilises Ochiai’s methodology when discussing the subject of chiefdoms as a form of governmental structure. In the original Japanese of this text, differentiating between pre- and postcolonial chiefdoms was slightly less straightforward, but here in the English text discussions of the chiefdoms in place before the onset of colonial rule will use the term ‘precolonial’ to modify the terms chiefdom, paramount chief and chief with.

³⁵ The Frontier-Police Force was formed in the hinterlands of Sierra Leone in 1890 to maintain public order there. This was before the area was proclaimed a British Protectorate.

³⁶ Supervising the paramount chiefs was a person in the position of District Commissioner, and this role was filled by someone from Britain. Appointed by the governor, the District Commissioner was dispatched to the districts. Unlike today, the hinterlands were divided into only five districts at the time (Ochiai 2007: 120).

³⁷ The native inhabitants of Sierra Leone were granted increasingly extensive rights to speak in the first half of the 20th century. Native individuals living in protectorate lands were given the opportunity to participate in the colonial government in the Constitution enacted in 1924. Before the establishment of the 1924 Constitution, the legislative council comprised six official members and four unofficial members. All of the official members were of European extraction and they included the governor of the colony. The unofficial members included, in practice, one European and three Krio members. In contrast to this, the 1924 Constitution provided a designated number of seats on the council to representatives of the protectorate lands and representatives of lands under the colonial administration. That Constitution prescribed the selection of 12 official council members and 10 unofficial members, and of those 12 official members, eight were stipulated as having to be African. Of those

eight, two would be native representatives appointed by the paramount chiefs (Pham 2005: 24). Governmental system reform in protectorate lands in 1946 (which established the district councils alongside the protectorate assembly) served as a catalyst for the movement demanding that the native population have a greater say in the running of national affairs, and in 1951, a new Constitution, with the goal of achieving independence, was enacted. That Constitution required that seven members be representatives of the colonial administration lands, with 14 members being selected as representatives of the protectorate region (Prince 1967: 155). The voices of those living in protectorate lands grew stronger from this time forward.

³⁸ Stevens was a native of Moyamba District, an ethnically diverse area that was a mix of Mende and people from the northern ethnicities. His father was Limba and his mother was Mende, but since ethnicity is determined by paternal decent, Stevens is considered to have been a member of the Limba people.

³⁹ Normally, patients will take medicinal herbs for a few days before visiting a herbalist. If that has no effect, they will make their way to a herbalist to have the herbalist determine the cause of the illness (Harris and Sawyerr 1968: 55–56).

⁴⁰ The term Mandé was introduced by French ethnographer Maurice Delafosse as a comprehensive title describing a number of similar groups of people living in Francophone areas of West Africa. It was defined using linguistic affinity as clues, and taking into account ethnicity, culture and history (Sakai 2003: 45). The Mandé are currently thought to be primarily made up of the Malinké, the Bambara and the Dyula. In Sierra Leone, the Malinké are known as the Mandingo people.

⁴¹ Islam was late to arrive in Mende land, appearing only in the 19th century. (Freetown and surrounding areas only became a Crown Colony in 1808.) Consequently, Islam hadn't sufficiently penetrated the lands in southern Sierra Leone by this point in their history. The primary school education offered by the government of the Crown Colony was mainly aimed at the Mende of southern Sierra Leone because, as explained, Islam had not yet spread there.

⁴² The word *karamoko* originates in a Mende language. It is a comes from *kara*, which itself comes from the Arabic word *qara'a* (a verb meaning 'to read' or 'to recite'), and the word *moko*, which means 'person'. One way to directly translate it would be as 'person who reads' (Sakai 2003: 130).

⁴³ The word ‘mori’ or ‘modi’ originates in the Soninke, Bozo and Fulbe languages (cf. Sakai 2003: 130), and it means ‘magic’ in the Krio tongue. ‘Men’ comes from the English word ‘man’ (Bledsoe and Robey 1986: 223. n. 5). The term *morimen* was then established in the Mende language as is.

⁴⁴ The election in which the APC beat the SLPP was held in 1967. However, political turmoil following the election meant that Stevens was unable to assume the position of Prime Minister until 1968.

⁴⁵ For example, Stevens made use of armed police officers from the Internal Security Unit to guard over the Lebanese mining operations. However, once the Lebanese gained more power, they armed themselves and began guarding their mines independently (Gberie 2005: 29).

⁴⁶ During the time of the Momoh Administration, the SSD were used to suppress the student movement. There is a reason why it was militarily superior to the SLA: its predecessor was the Internal Security Unit (ISU). The ISU was created by former President Siaka Stevens to be used as his private army, as he was unable to sufficiently control the SLA. Stevens did not trust the SLA and tried to ensure that it did not become too powerful, while at the same time he strengthened the ISU (Gberie 2005: 29).

⁴⁷ They were witnessed in locations including Daru and Potoru, and the outskirts of Kenema (TRC 3A 2004: 150).

⁴⁸ Transcript of *The Prosecutor of the Special Court v. Charles Ghankay Taylor* (SCSL-2003-01-T), 10 January 2008, pp. 958–959.

⁴⁹ Interview with the author on 15 January 2011 in Tubmanburg.

⁵⁰ Interview with the author on 13 January 2011 in Monrovia.

⁵¹ Interview with the author. Anonymous.

⁵² Transcript of *The Prosecutor of the Special Court v. Charles Ghankay Taylor* (SCSL-2003-01-T), 10 June 2010, p. 424–84.

⁵³ Interview with Sparrow’s younger brother conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 at his home in Bo.

⁵⁴ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Jalloh on 31 December 2010 in Potoru.

⁵⁵ Kabia Emmanuel, ‘Echoes from Ben-Hirsch’s Death’, *Concord Times*, 28 August 1992.

⁵⁶ While some Sierra Leoneans hunted monkeys to export to Liberia, there were also Liberians who came to Sierra Leone in order to poach. The number of monkeys in Liberia dropped due to overhunting, so from the 1970s Liberians have sneaked into Sierra Leone to hunt the primates. They

set up camp in small settlements and used that as a base to go off searching in the bush. It is said that they would sometimes kill as many as several hundred monkeys in a week. When the hunters returned to camp, they cut off the arms and legs and smoked the monkeys (Oats 2006: 94). The author discovered during his fieldwork that after the civil war, this large-scale poaching by Liberians was apparently no longer seen.

⁵⁷ Interview with the author on 31 December 2010 in Joru.

⁵⁸ 'Lavalie Died a Martyr', *Vision*, 14-(21 April 1994).

⁵⁹ From an interview conducted by the author with a former RUF combatant on 10 November 2009 in Monrovia.

⁶⁰ 'Four Soldiers Arrested with Looted Property', *The New Citizen* (May 24, 1993).

⁶¹ While many chiefs led vigilante organisations in an effort to protect their chiefdoms, there were also some exceptions. In particular, chiefs who had been externally appointed during the APC regime feared becoming the target of revenge by civilians taking advantage of the confusion (It is said that they were especially afraid of the hunters). In some cases, they demanded pistols and bodyguards from the government to protect themselves (Keen 2005: 132).

⁶² The term 'cutlass' in Sierra Leone is often used to refer to the bladed tool more commonly known elsewhere as a machete. They are generally used for cutting grass and farming.

⁶³ The Mano Sakrim and Yakemo-Kpukumu Chiefdoms in Pujehun District and the Kwamebai Krim Chiefdom in Bonthe District were part of this venture.

⁶⁴ From field research conducted by the author.

⁶⁵ At time when Norman was born, it was known as Linia Chiefdom, but it later became Valunia Chiefdom after a merger (SCSL 24 January 2006).

⁶⁶ At the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Norman testified that he was appointed acting chief in October 1994, but this was likely the result of a one-year miscalculation on his part (SCSL 24 January 2006: 59).

⁶⁷ Four chiefdoms in Bo District (Wonde, Gboyama, Baoma and Tikonko) and one in Pujehun District (SCSL 24 January 2006: 59).

⁶⁸ Relations with the SLA deteriorated after the commanding officer stationed in Boajibu changed. Under the new commander, the SLA confiscated the weapons of the hunter militia and forced the inhabitants to

work in agriculture and mining. Furthermore, when the SLA was attacked by a group likely belonging to the RUF, suspicion instead was cast on the hunter militia and two hunters are reported to have been executed (Smith et al. 2004: 313).

⁶⁹ From an interview conducted by the author with Mohammed Duai on 27 November 2009 in Freetown.

⁷⁰ 'Telu Massacre: A Survivor Tells His Ordeal', *Vision*, 14-(21 July 1994). See Photograph 6-1.

⁷¹ I heard a similar story from a Kamajor, who said that Norman had told it to him. In the Kamajor's version, even after Norman was captured, the rebels did not realise he was the chief, so he was able to escape.

⁷² From an interview conducted by the author with Kamoh Mohammed Doctor Masalley on 3 January 2011 in Bo.

⁷³ According to Hoffman (2011a), Saddam Sheriff had a Mauritanian father, and it is rumoured that he received some witchdoctor training in Egypt.

⁷⁴ From an interview conducted by the author with Albert Nallo on 8 January 2011 in Freetown. He also testified in the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL 10 March 2005).

⁷⁵ Later in the civil war, some initiators were killed on the battlefield. One initiator called Moalem Boni was struck by a bullet and died as he was leading his troops at the front lines in Pujehun District (From an interview with Sparrow conducted by the author on 12 September 2012 in Monrovia).

⁷⁶ In an interview with Ibrahim Tucker conducted by the author on 23 November 2009 in Mattru.

⁷⁷ In an interview with Ibrahim Tucker conducted by the author on 23 November 2009 in Mattru.

⁷⁸ Camps for internally displaced persons were established in the following cities and towns in the Mende land: Bo Town; Gerihun, in the Boama Chiefdom; Taiama, in the Kori Chiefdom; and Gondama, in the Kakua Chiefdom (Smith et al, 2004: 298, 497–500). The camp at Gerihun was set up in March 1994 (Keen 2005: 123).

⁷⁹ In an interview with the author on 4 October 2011 in Freetown. The man claimed to have lived in Gondama Camp between 1995 and 1997.

⁸⁰ In an interview conducted by the author with Eddie Massallay on 31 December 2010 in Jurin.

⁸¹ In an interview conducted by the author with Albert Nallo on 8 November 2011 in Freetown.

⁸² Among the combatants already in the hunter militias, there were some who had not had a chance to be initiated (Włodarczyk 2009: 101). With the spread of the Kamajor initiation rites, these people also came to be called Kamajors.

⁸³ In an interview with Doctor Massallay conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 in Bo Town.

⁸⁴ In an interview with Doctor Massallay conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 in Bo Town.

⁸⁵ In *Conflict Mapping*, it also says that the Sierra Leone armed forces forcibly evacuated people in the Gallines Perri Chiefdom for their own safety in February 1993. According to the account given here, the refugees were ordered to go to Koribondo in Bo District where there was a military base, and an international NGO was also providing food there. However, it is said that after the people arrived at Koribundo, they were then ordered to go to Gondama Camp, which was in the same District (Smith et al. 2004: 499–500).

⁸⁶ In an interview conducted by the author with Abu Bakar Kamara on 11 September 2012 in Monrovia.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ In an interview conducted by the author with Doctor Massallay on 2 January 2011 in Bo.

⁸⁹ In an interview conducted by the author with Doctor Massallay on 2 January, 2011 in Bo. Similar testimony was also obtained from several other sources.

⁹⁰ For more on Mama Munda Fortune, see Hoffman (2011a, 2011c).

⁹¹ According to Innes (1969), the Kassela is a type of spirit and it is said that its boat can sometimes be seen shining at night. Kenneth Little also mentions the “Kaswela,” a spirit that is said to live in Bonthe (Little 1967: 223). According to Hoffman, both Mama Munda and Hinga Norman apparently described the Kassela as a riverine devil (Hoffman 2011a: 294). During my fieldwork, one Sierra Leonean explained to me that the Kassela is monster that appears in the in the sea and rivers.

⁹² In an interview conducted by the author with Doctor Massaley on 3 January 2011 in Bo Town.

⁹³ In an interview conducted by the author with Doctor Massallay on 2 January 2011 in Bo Town.

⁹⁴ Another assistant called 'Sacrament' (details unknown) was also sent to the northern region.

⁹⁵ In an interview conducted by the author with Sheik Kabbah on 4 January 2011 at his home in Kenema.

⁹⁶ In an Interview with the author on 5 October, 2008 in Monrovia.

⁹⁷ In an interview with the author on 3 January 2011 in Girehun.

⁹⁸ In an interview conducted by the author with Albert Nallo on 8 November 2011 in Freetown.

⁹⁹ In an interview with the author on 10 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹⁰⁰ Based on the author's own fieldwork.

¹⁰¹ Kamajors from the same chiefdom were not necessarily initiated at the same time by the same initiator. Even in the same chiefdom, the timing of the initiations varied according to the individual Kamajor, and some received the initiation rites from a different initiator.

¹⁰² Monuru built a shrine in Pujehun District (Hoffman 2011a: 77). His background up to then is unknown.

¹⁰³ Saddam Sheriff had his own combat unit even before the group of initiators at Kale Village came together and he went to the front lines in person. Following this precedent, his assistants Moalem Shuahibu Sheriff, Brima Bangura and Moalem Boni also acquired their own forces. The newly formed units under the command of initiators that are being discussed in this section are different from these.

¹⁰⁴ In an interview with the author on 31 December 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Not all the initiations were abbreviated or expanded in scale, however. Some individuals said that in 1996 they were taught various things in some detail at their initiations, from how to launch an ambush and how to use weapons to the Kamajor's organisational structure and chain of command.

¹⁰⁶ In an interview with the author on 3 January 2011 in Girehun.

¹⁰⁷ In an interview with the author on 4 October 2011 in Freetown.

¹⁰⁸ The author took a photograph of a picture when Sheik Kabbah showed it during his interview. The time and place it was taken are not clear, but in his own words he said, 'I took it after I had performed an initiation rite'.

¹⁰⁹ In an interview with the author on 4 October 2011 in Freetown.

¹¹⁰ In an interview with the author on 18 October, 2008 in Monrovia.

¹¹¹ Both the Vai and Mende languages are part of the Mandé language group, but it is said that some learning is required in order for them to be able to understand one another.

¹¹² Some Mende who did not have relatives in Liberia would also pretend to have a familial connection in order to go and work there (and this phenomenon was not just limited to people in the Pujehun District). Up until the 1980s, Liberia was economically more developed than Sierra Leone. Some Mende would search for someone in Liberia with the same name, pay them money and have them pretend they were a relation by marriage (from fieldwork by the writer).

¹¹³ In an interview with Eddie Massallay conducted by the author on 30 December 2010 in Girehun.

¹¹⁴ Fithen regards Eddie Massallay as a 'Kamor'. However, this appellation is not appropriate; as noted in Chapter 4, 'Kamor' is a title for Islamic intellectuals. It was never used as a title for Kamajor commanders. When I showed Fithen's paper to a Kamajor, he said that no one ever addressed Eddie Massallay as a 'Kamor' commander. When I showed Fithen's paper to a Kamajor, he said that no one even addressed Eddie as 'Kamor'.

¹¹⁵ Samuel Hinga Norman was from Valunia Chiefdom.

¹¹⁶ See Peters (2006) for details of the Zogoda Base. The base was established in February 1994 after the RUF switched to guerrilla warfare tactics (TRC 3A 2004: 192).

¹¹⁷ After President Kabbah took power in March 1996, he entered into peace negotiations with the RUF. It has been pointed out that the fighting continued in spite of Kabbah's efforts because his administration was unable to control the Kamajors (Muana 1997: 98). Seeing the lack of progress in the peace talks, President Kabbah tried to prohibit hostile actions by the Kamajors. He repeatedly stated in public that the armed forces of the Sierra Leone government were the only armed forces of the state and that the peace negotiations were ongoing. In spite of this, there was no end to operations by the Kamajors. It is said that Hinga Norman, who was the Deputy Minister of Defence in the Kabbah government, also actively supported the Kamajors. Attacks by the Kamajors continued, even though President Kabbah publicly declared that he would apply sanctions

to the Kamajors if there was no peace treaty by December 1999 (Pham 2005: 121).

¹¹⁸ For the process leading to the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord, see Hirsh (2001: 51–52).

¹¹⁹ It is said that his real name was Mohammed Tarawalie (the spelling Terawalley may also be used). For more details, see the Abdullah (1998), TRC 3A (2004), Okano (2011b).

¹²⁰ In an interview with the author on 3 January 2011 in Girehun.

¹²¹ In an interview with Sparrow conducted by the author in September 2012.

¹²² The May 25 coup is remembered by Sierra Leoneans as ‘May Twenty-five’.

¹²³ This is the number of officially registered personnel reported to the Kabbah government. The actual number of personnel is unknown (TRC 3A 2004: 237).

¹²⁴ Maggi is a brand of synthetic seasoning that comes in the form of stock cubes. Maggi is almost always used in cooking in Sierra Leone.

¹²⁵ Interview conducted by author on 12 September 2011 in the Freetown suburb of Waterloo, with a woman who had been living in Mekanji at the time of the incident described.

¹²⁶ ‘Facts about AFRC Coup’, *For di People*, 13 July 1997.

¹²⁷ UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/1997/29 (Issued 27 May 1991).

¹²⁸ Ochiai (2011b) offers a detailed description of the circumstances leading up to the issuing of the resolution.

¹²⁹ At the end of August 1997, the ECOWAS Committee convened in Abuja and resolved to place a number of economic sanctions on the military regime in Sierra Leone, including oil and arms embargoes. In October, the United Nations Security Council resolved to follow suit in placing its own economic sanctions on Sierra Leone, restricting travel for individuals connected to the Sierra Leone government, putting in place embargos on oil and oil products and banning the import/export of weapons and weapon-related materiel (UNSC Resolution 1132). This resolution also officially authorised ECOWAS to ensure the provisions of the resolution were implemented through the inspection and verification of cargoes on inward-heading vessels inspections (Gbla and Ochiai 2011: 9).

¹³⁰ In October 1997, negotiations took place between ECOWAS and the military government of Sierra Leone. They resulted in a peace plan that would disarm the AFRC/RUF forces in December and return the Kabbah administration to government by April 1998. However, implementation of the peace plan was frustrated (Gbla and Ochiai 2011:10).

¹³¹ MSF is a non-governmental organisation that provides medical and other humanitarian aid.

¹³² Interview conducted by author with Eddie Massallay on 30 December 2010 in Jurin.

¹³³ Sierra Leone Web, Sierra Leone News Archives (May 1997), <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0597.html>. (Cited on 7th November 2012).

¹³⁴ Interview conducted by author with Abu Bakar Kamara on 11 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹³⁵ Interview conducted by author on 19 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹³⁶ Interview conducted by author on 20 November 2009 in Kenema.

¹³⁷ Saddam Sharif had other students named Zaidan Kamara and Moalem Wai,, who served as junior initiators under him, and who later founded their own shrines during the late Kabbah administration.

¹³⁸ Interview conducted by author with Ibrahim Tucker in Freetown on 2 October 2011.

¹³⁹ Through such military interventions, ECOMOG, after intervening in the First Liberian Civil War, began to be used in the Sierra Leone Civil War without the official approval of ECOWAS (Gbla and Ochiai 2011: 15).

¹⁴⁰ ‘One’ was inserted into Abdul Mohammed’s name by the Nigerian army to distinguish him from the many others by the same name. This name is used in official reports as well. TRC refers him as General Abdul Aziz Mohamed. According to TRC, he was a strong proponent of the deployment of the Kamajors in an armed intervention to dislodge the AFRC (TRC 3A 2004: 250).

¹⁴¹ A soldier in the Nigerian Army who served as ECOMOG force commander in Liberia from December 1996 to April 1998. At the time, he had the rank of Major-General (Waugh 2011: 234). He later rose to serve as Chief of Army Staff in the Nigerian Army. Information on Malu’s career was found in the following article by Agbaegbu, Tobs, ‘Fighting for All Times’, *News Watch*, Vol. 35, No. 24, 17 June 2002.

¹⁴² Interview conducted by the author on 30 December 2010 with Eddie Massallay in Jurin.

¹⁴³ See previous footnote.

¹⁴⁴ Interview conducted by author on 30 November 2009 with Sparrow's father in Kailahun District.

¹⁴⁵ Sierra Leone Web, Sierra Leone News Archives (August 1997). (Cited on 13th November 2012).

¹⁴⁶ Sparrow and the other members of the underground claimed that they had come up with the CDF name, but the Kamajors in Sierra Leone are unaware of this claim, saying that they had never heard that.

¹⁴⁷ During the time the author was conducting his field research, the villas were being used by PAKBATT (the Pakistani military battalion attached to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces).

¹⁴⁸ The ambassador had originally been sent to Liberia by the Kabbah administration, but as he was a retired military officer, he stayed in his post after the May 25 Coup and served the AFRC government.

¹⁴⁹ ECOMOG's headquarters were located within Monrovia city limits and the units dispatched by the countries in ECOWAS each set up their own bases. Ricks Institute was made the headquarters for the Nigerian Army contingent.

¹⁵⁰ While the exact name wasn't testified upon in court, a statement was made in front of the Special Court for Sierra Leone claiming that the individual met Norman at what seems to have been Ricks Institute (SCSL 17 February 2005).

¹⁵¹ Interview conducted by author with Maada Gleh on 3 October 2011 in Freetown.

¹⁵² Sierra Leone Web, Sierra Leone News Archives (July 1997) at <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0797.html>. (Cited on 7 November 2012).

¹⁵³ 1 mile = Approx. 1.6 km.

¹⁵⁴ Interview conducted by the author with Sparrow on 17 September 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker on 2 October 2011 in Freetown.

¹⁵⁶ Interview conducted by the author on 12 December 2009 in Bo-Waterside.

¹⁵⁷ Interview conducted by the author on 4 October 2011 in Freetown.

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- ¹⁵⁸ Interview conducted by the author on 4 October 2011 in Freetown.
- ¹⁵⁹ Interview conducted with Ibrahim Jalloh by the author on 31 December 2010 at a hotel.
- ¹⁶⁰ Interview conducted by the author on 28 December in Monrovia.
- ¹⁶¹ Interview conducted with Ibrahim Jalloh by the author on 31 December 2010 at a hotel.
- ¹⁶² Interview conducted with Ibrahim Jalloh by the author on 31 December 2010 at a hotel.
- ¹⁶³ It should be noted that these statements may have been simply flattery as the author was receiving the help of Sparrow.
- ¹⁶⁴ Interview conducted by the author with Eddie Massallay on 30 December 2010 in Jurin.
- ¹⁶⁵ ULIMO was organised into a political wing and a military wing, and the Special Force imitated that structure. The official name of the unit was apparently the military wing, CDF Special Forces, though the unit had no political wing.
- ¹⁶⁶ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker in Maturu on 23 November 2009.
- ¹⁶⁷ Interview conducted with Ibrahim Jalloh by the author on 31 December 2010 at a hotel.
- ¹⁶⁸ Details about how the election unfolded can be found in Waugh 2011: 228-244.
- ¹⁶⁹ Sierra Leone Web, Sierra Leone News Archives (November 1997), <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews1197.html>>. (Cited on 13 November, 2012).
- ¹⁷⁰ Interview conducted by the author with Eddie Massallay on 30 December 2010 in Jurin.
- ¹⁷¹ There were two initiators named Lahai Bangura. The Lahai Bangura who has been described up to this point was a different person from the one in this chapter. The previous Lahai Bangura began performing initiations in Kale village and later founded a shrine in collaboration with another person named Mama Munda. The Lahai Bangura who appears in this discussion is a different person.
- ¹⁷² This initiation is also discussed in the *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone* report (Smith et al. 2004: 444).
- ¹⁷³ Interview conducted by the author on 21 November 2009 in Talia.

¹⁷⁴ In Nallo's statement to the court, he named the individuals that made up Kondewa's cabinet at that time, saying, 'Kamoh Gboni, Kamoh Fuwad, Gibrilla, CO Makossi [phon], Hallie Namoi [phon], Woodie [phon]. That was the cabinet'. (SCSL 10 March 2005:29).

¹⁷⁵ Interview conducted by the author on 7 October 2011 in Freetown.

¹⁷⁶ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker in Maturu on 23 November 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Interview conducted by the author with Eddie Massallay on 30 December 2010 in Jurin. Tucker also provided the author with a statement that was similar (23 November 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Interview conducted by the author on 10 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹⁷⁹ Interview conducted by the author on 10 October 2008 in Monrovia.

¹⁸⁰ Interview conducted by the author with Albert Nallo on 8 November 2011 in Freetown.

¹⁸¹ Statements on Lumeh's inclusion in the War Council and the War Council's lack of functionality were also made during testimony given on 10 March 2005.

¹⁸² Interview conducted by the author on 10 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹⁸³ Interview conducted by the author on 10 September 2012 in Monrovia.

¹⁸⁴ A very interesting story about the occupation of Bo was provided to the author by a Kamajor who had been stationed at Base Zero.

Base Zero was very uncomfortable to live in. It was because there was a lot of destructive behaviour going on. That's why our unit left Base Zero and we decided to make our way to Tambala (The location of this area is unknown). However, when we were on our way there, we were discovered by junta forces and we were taken to Bo. We were detained in Bo for a week. We were lucky though, because a week after we got there, the CDF came to Bo and attacked. (Interview conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 in Bo).

¹⁸⁵ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker 23 November 2009 in Maturu.

¹⁸⁶ In the course of the author's research, the author travelled past Zimmi by motorcycle. Sparrow pointed to a building and said, 'That is the

place that we used for an office'.He said that they had requisitioned the largest building in Zimmi for their use.

¹⁸⁷ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker on 23 November 2009 in Maturu.

¹⁸⁸ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Jaro on 31 December 2010 in Potoru.

¹⁸⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Tucker on 23 November 2009 in Maturu.

¹⁹⁰ Interview conducted by the author on 10 November 2009 in Monrovia.

¹⁹¹ Interview conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 in Bo.

¹⁹² Interview conducted by the author on 8 October 2008 in Monrovia.

¹⁹³ Interview conducted by the author on 27 November 2009 in Freetown Monrovia.

¹⁹⁴ Interview conducted by the author on 7 October 2011 in Freetown Monrovia.

¹⁹⁵ *Sierra Leone News* (March 1998). News Archives. Sierra Leone Web. (Cited on 28 November 2012) <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0398.html>>.

¹⁹⁶ After the 6 January 1999 Invasion of Freetown (covered later), Khobe left his position in ECOMOG to concentrate on his duties as Chief of Defence Staff for the SLA. One reason for that was because Khobe's stay in Sierra Leone had become so long that he was no longer maintaining sufficient contact with ECOMOG headquarters in Liberia (Hirsh 2001: 73).

¹⁹⁷ Interview conducted by the author with Sparrow on 2 February 2011.

¹⁹⁸ The information here was gathered during interviews with Sparrow, Eddie Massallay and other former members of the CDF leadership.

¹⁹⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Doctor Massallay in Bo on 3 January 2011.

²⁰⁰ The Donsos were a vigilante group made up of Kono people. The group had been supplied by the Guinean government and had no contact with the CDF.

²⁰¹ The experiences of a commander dispatched to the northern region as a part of ECOMOG have been published (Adeshima 2002).

²⁰² Interview conducted by the author with Albert Nallo on 8 October 2011 in Freetown.

²⁰³ Interview conducted by the author on 24 December 2010 in Monrovia.

²⁰⁴ Interview conducted by the author with Sparrow on 24 December 2010 in Monrovia.

²⁰⁵ Interview conducted by the author with Sparrow on 17 September 2012.

²⁰⁶ Interview conducted by the author with Mohammed Maada Gleh on 3 October 2011 in Freetown. Hoffman also interviewed Gleh (Hoffman 2011a: 137-149).

²⁰⁷ The January 6 Invasion was conducted with the support of the Liberian President, Charles Taylor. The unit under the command of Sam Bockarie in Kailahun District was provided military training by a former South African army soldier sent to them by President Taylor (Gberie 2005: 124). In addition, the weapons and ammunition used during the attack on Freetown had been brought there from Monrovia, after having been unloaded in a fishing village on the outskirts of the city (Hirsh 2001:62).

²⁰⁸ Interview conducted by the author with Mohammed Duai on 27 November 2009 in Freetown.

²⁰⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Abu Bakar Kamara on 11 September 2012 in Monrovia.

²¹⁰ There are few documents that actually make reference to the National Coordinating Committee. However, there is mention of the NCC in the documents submitted for the trial of Moinina Fofana at the Special Court for Sierra Leone – ‘Statement of Simon Arthey re Moinina Fofana’, Supplement for the Fofana Sentencing Brief, SCSL-04-14-T, Special Court for Sierra Leone.

²¹¹ Interview conducted by the author with Abu Bakar Kamara on 13 September 2012 in Monrovia.

²¹² Interview conducted by the author with Mohammed Duai on 27 November 2009 in Freetown.

²¹³ Interview conducted by the author on 4 October 2009 in Freetown.

²¹⁴ Interview conducted by the author with Ibrahim Jaro on 31 December 2010 in Potoru.

²¹⁵ Interview conducted by the author on 2 January 2011 in Bo.

²¹⁶ Interview conducted with Sparrow by the author on 19 January 2011.

²¹⁷ Interview conducted by the author on 8 October 2008 in Monrovia.

²¹⁸ Hoffman also discusses the TDF in Hoffman 2011b: 100.

²¹⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Mohammed Duai on 27 November 2009 in Freetown. Duai also served as national base commander at Brookfields Hotel.

²²⁰ 'SCSL-2003-14-I: *The Prosecutor v. Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa Indictment (PDF)*'. Special Court for Sierra Leone. 5 February 2005.

²²¹ *The Prosecutor vs. Sam Hinga Norman. Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa*, Special Court for Sierra Leone/Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone. (Cited on 18 October 2014) <http://www.rscsl.org/CDF.html>.

²²² The first interview took place on 23 November 2009 in Maturu and the second interview took place on 2 October 2011 in Freetown.

²²³ Karamoko is the name for the Islamic teachers previously described in Chapter 4.

²²⁴ After the civil war, Sierra Leone implemented a reform of its regional governments. In January 2004, the Local Government Act was passed in the national parliament and enacted into law in March that year. Local elections were held two months later in May (Ochiai 2007).

²²⁵ As this book focuses on adult males, it may be said that we could see them as 'victims'. Normally, attention is given to the old, women and children as victims in a civil war, and it is rare that the class of 'adult male' is emphasised as the victim.

As the vast majority of the combatants are adult males, they tend to be regarded as being society's strongest members, but what becomes clear in this book is that adult males have become the weaker members precisely because of their latent strength. As Chapter 6 confirms, in Bonthe District, adult males became Kamajors in order to avoid being falsely accused of various 'crimes' at Kamajor checkpoints. Furthermore, after the May 25 Incident, adult males in Bo were persecuted on the suspicion that they might be Kamajors. What these events tell is that adult males become the victims precisely because they are the latent strong figures. Of course, in a civil war, the old, the women and the children are the weak, but we also need to address that adult males may also be counted among the weak precisely for who they are.

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INDEX

A

Abacha, Sani 208–209, 276

Abidjan Peace Accord 33, 78, 184, 193, 196

 military restructuring based in the 193

abolitionist 12–13

abuse 92, 140, 142–143, 340, 364

Action Group (AG) 156–157, 335

administrative staff 232–233, 235, 242

administrative wing 280–281, 290, 325

administrator 96, 285–291, 296–297, 301, 303–304, 351–352

Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) 34–36, 45, 48, 78, 82–83, 94, 275, 277–278, 285, 287, 290–292, 297–298, 300, 306–311, 313–315, 320–322, 330–331, 343, 346, 348, 359

 administration 34–35, 191–237, 239–274

African conflicts

 contribution to 350–352

 studies of 5–6, 53–69

aide(s)-de-camp 302–303, 350

 Mohammed Maada Gleh: one

of Sparrow's 305–306

Airborne Division

 Captain Prince Ben-Hirsh's

129–130

Akirio 13–14

Albert Nallo 245, 251, 256–257, 260, 296–297

 Base Zero Kamajor 337–340

All People's Congress (APC) 27, 29, 104–106, 115, 120, 145, 341, 356

alliance 162, 177

ammunition 65, 122, 145, 148, 186, 218–219, 222–223, 227, 242–244, 252, 254, 262, 280–281, 291, 308, 310, 318

analytical framework 6

 constructing a hypothesis and

establishing an 53–84

ancestral spirits 109, 114

anthropology

 contribution to 352–355

 and political science 5–9

apprentice 39–40, 75, 110, 128

armed conflict 3, 5, 7, 33, 53, 72, 76, 92, 352, 361

 and the dissolution of PC

networks 61–62
previous literature on states and
53–69

Armed Forces Revolutionary
Council (AFRC) 34, 36, 45, 48, 78,
82–83, 94, 191, 275, 277–278, 285,
287, 290–292, 297–298, 300, 306–
315, 320, 322, 330–331, 343, 346,
348, 359

administration: May 1997 to
March 1998 34–35

administration period I (May
1997 to November 1997) 191–237

administration period II
(November 1997 to March 1998)
239–274

armed groups 72–73, 92, 123,
322

as human networks 345–365

B

Bandajuma 172

Bangura, Kamoh Brima 164,
185, 187–188, 220, 346

Bangura, Kamoh Lahai 154–
155, 169–171, 174, 178, 182, 206,
243, 258, 327, 336

Bangura, Mohammed O. 284

Bangura, Brigadier John 27

Base Zero 239–246, 248–249,
261–262, 269–273, 275, 280–289,

296–297, 299–300, 312, 327, 330–
331, 336, 347–349

activities in 249–260

Albert Nallo 337–340

organisational structure of
253–268

and the other Kamajor groups
249–253

battalion commander 235, 242,
249, 285–287, 343

battles 23, 188, 192, 200–221,
224–225, 230, 276, 316

major battles during the second
Kabbah administration 306–316

Becker 286

benefits 59–60, 64, 66, 72, 76–
77, 103, 284, 325, 347, 362

Ben-Hirsh, Captain 130

‘Airborne Division’ 129

Bio, Julius Maada 32–33, 169–
170

Bo 19–20, 31, 125–126, 137,
140–145, 150, 157, 160–171, 174–
175, 182–187, 201, 205–206, 220–
221, 250, 257, 261–262, 266–269,
286, 289–290, 297, 300–301, 304,
318, 324–325, 328, 336–343s

School 102–103

Bo-Waterside 2117–218

Boclarie, Sam 307

Bombali 287, 291

Bonnie, Kamoh 220

Bonthe 19, 31, 137, 139–140, 144, 158, 161, 163, 169–170, 176, 188, 196, 200, 205–206, 242, 257, 286, 325, 335, 338, 342

hunter militia in 150–153

messengers from 242–245

origin of initiation rites in 150–157

spread of the Kamajors in 155–156

Born Naked Brigade 177, 294

Brookfields Hotel 283, 292–295, 307–309, 313, 317, 321–322, 328, 343

abandonment of 323–324

Sparrow and 311–313

brutality 3–4, 356–357

Buffa, Sahr 288

C

cabinet 37, 78, 164, 245, 261, 311

Cape Sierra 277, 298

Carew, Major General Tom 314

chain of command 46, 73, 231–232, 248, 254–256, 273, 347

chairman 37, 133–134, 161–162, 186, 197–198, 232, 260, 348

change

in Kamajor Unit

Composition from the

Perspective of the CDF

Special Forces 270–271

in the structure of the civil war 202

characteristics 5, 11, 25, 51, 74, 109, 182, 191, 334, 348, 353, 357

of the CDF 44–51

of the CDF as seen through

quantitative research 47–51

interpersonal network, not a group 46–47

of the Kamajors 38–44

of Sierra Leone that influenced the nature of the civil war 19–23

checkpoint 144, 176–177, 195, 218, 335, 364, 389

chiefdom (general) 1, 11, 14, 24–26, 31, 45, 69, 71, 77–78, 82, 93–113, 130–135, 137, 143–147, 150, 153, 156–159, 166–167, 173–177, 180, 189, 201, 205, 231, 235, 248, 251–252, 327, 336–338, 342, 345–346, 350, 356

cooperation among hunter

militias based in different 159–163

Kamajor group that expanded by bringing multiple chiefdoms under its control 185–188

Kamajors organising across 181–188

- mobilising the Kamajors 95–108
 - chiefdom (specific)
 - Bagbe 145, 183
 - Banta 246
 - Boama 145, 174, 183, 185, 378
 - Bongor 256
 - Bumpe 256
 - Dodo 167
 - Gallines Perri 165, 341–342, 379
 - Jaiama 256
 - Jiama Bongor 144–146, 148, 166–167, 219, 256
 - Jong 152, 257
 - Kakua 160, 378
 - Kamajei 175
 - Kandu Leppiam 171
 - Kogboro 258
 - Komboya 141, 162
 - Kori 378
 - Kpa Mende 99
 - Kpaka 341
 - Kwamebai Krim 151, 153–155, 377
 - Langruma 185
 - Linia 377
 - Lower Banta 258
 - Malema 371
 - Mano Sakrim 151, 377
 - Mende 113
 - Neini 130–131
 - Niawa 185
 - Nongoba Bullom 154, 156, 206, 330, 335
 - Nongoba Bullum 206, 243, 330, 335
 - Nongowa 133, 172
 - Shenge 256
 - Simbaru 146–147
 - Small Bo 185
 - Sogbini 167, 169–170, 245
 - Soro Gbema 181–182, 221–222
 - Sowa 172
 - Valunia 144–145, 183, 328, 377, 381
 - Wandor 147, 166
 - Wara Wara Yagala 131
 - Wonde 185
 - Wunde 146
 - Yakemo-Kpukumu 377
 - Yawbeko 156, 245, 247
 - Zimmi 221
 - chieftaincy 95–97, 102, 107, 245
 - colonisation and the introduction of 100–101
 - outline after independence 95–96
 - Civil Defence Committee in Bo 144
 - Civil Defence Force (CDF)

CDF-wide PC network 78–80	what was the CDF 23–24
change in Kamajor unit	civil war
composition from the	changes in the structure 202
perspective of the CDF	conditions in Sierra Leone
Special Forces 270–271	directly before 115–118
characteristics of the 44–51	contribution to research 355–
characteristics of the CDF as	360
seen through quantitative research	course 2, 26–38, 45, 51, 65–66,
47–51	92, 119, 157
confusion surrounding this	end 83, 196, 208, 234, 240,
term 46–47	275–330, 333
defining 23–26, 45	before the formation of the
dismantling 316–330	Kamajors 119–135
formation of the CDF Special	four characteristics of Sierra
Forces 24, 212, 228–231, 334	Leone that influenced the nature
function of PC networks from	19–23
the perspective of the CDF Special	interdisciplinary examination
Forces 334–335	1–10
internal power struggle as seen	outline 11–51
through Sparrow's experiences 297–	people who lived through 333–
306	344
military operations 295–296	Cockerill 197, 272
organisational structure of the	code 227, 259
CDF Special Forces 231–234	collaborator 37, 125, 127, 192,
organising the CDF 278–297	209–211, 222, 228, 241, 257–259,
outline of the Sierra Leone civil	267, 296
war and the Kamajor/CDF 11–51	Sparrow: A Research
reorganising the central	Collaborator 90–92
structure of the CDF 279–294	collective history 88
Sparrow and the CDF Special	colonial government 14, 27,
Forces 227–236	97–103, 107, 374

- colonisation
- and the introduction of the chieftaincy system 100–101
- combat units
- establishment 177–180
- combatant 3–4, 28, 37, 45, 47–49, 69, 73, 76, 84, 106, 120–133, 138–139, 144, 153, 156–159, 163, 177, 181, 183, 186, 198, 214, 218, 225–237, 241, 247, 261, 263–277, 283–284, 287–288, 292–296, 300–301, 318, 323–325, 328–329, 331, 334–335, 344, 348–350, 352, 354–355, 357, 361, 363–364
- flow of into Liberia 319–323
- commander 46–47, 69, 72, 76, 81, 84–85, 90, 92, 127, 129–130, 132, 141, 155–157, 164, 177–178, 180, 183, 185–187, 189, 204–208, 223, 225, 227–228, 231–235, 241–243, 249, 251, 254–256, 260–262, 268–269, 271, 277–278, 285–287, 291–295, 297, 300, 303–308, 317–318, 320, 329, 336–337, 341, 343, 346–347, 350, 354, 358–360
- Albert Nallo: One of Commanders in Base Zero Kamajor 337–340
- how individual commanders built their own PC networks 80–81
- mobilisation of irregular troops

- as personal clients of 128–129
- Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) 37, 311
- communications officer 227, 284–285
- conflict
- previous literature 53–69
- Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone 221, 268, 280
- organisational structure of the CDF according to 278–279
- violations of international humanitarian law from 1991 to 2002 93
- confrontation 35, 62, 65, 296, 362
- confusion 37, 137, 139, 141, 148, 187, 256, 313, 329, 336, 347, 356
- surrounding the term ‘CDF’ 45
- of terminology used in previous studies 24–26
- Constitution 32, 103, 105, 115, 374–375
- control 27–32, 36, 41, 57–59, 68–71, 83, 97–99, 102–111, 115–116, 120, 127, 135, 138, 141–142, 146, 157–158, 160, 174, 177, 181–

182, 184, 189, 191, 195–196, 200–
202, 212, 221–225, 239, 241, 244,
253, 255, 259–272, 277, 280, 284–
285, 290, 298–300, 308, 311–315,
326, 334, 339, 346–347, 356–358

Kamajor group that expanded
by bringing multiple chiefdoms
under its 185–188

units under the control of
initiators 177–178

cooperation 27, 31, 81, 83, 155,
157, 218, 251, 300, 321–322, 329

among hunter militias based in
different chiefdoms 159–163

corruption 58, 66, 72, 355

Cote d'Ivoire 41

counter-insurgency 122, 135,
186

coup 27–30, 32–34, 58, 61–62,
82, 121, 130, 133, 145, 169, 191–
192, 203–207, 210–211, 214, 217,
219, 221, 229, 236–237, 240, 242–
243, 246, 250, 253, 283, 286, 292,
328, 336, 338

circumstances that led to the
May 25 192–202

and the exile of President

Kabbah 197–199

Kamajors immediately after the
May 25 199–200

crime 6, 93, 100, 389

cronyism 355, 358

crown colony 13–16, 95, 98,
102

cruelty 4, 259, 356, 364

cultural and social

anthropology 6–7

contribution to 352–355

examining the civil war from
the perspectives of political science
and 5–9

D

Dar es Salaam 172

Daru 121, 123, 129, 134, 186,
204, 269, 272, 342–343

death sentence 36, 306–307

Demby, Albert Joe 312

democracy 35, 56, 83, 202–204,
210, 231, 346, 348

restoration of democracy
210–215

democratic rule 202, 211

descriptive method 87–90, 360
in this book 89–90

ethnography of human

networks 352–353

deterioration 34, 63, 132, 192–
193

development 2, 6, 54, 82, 90,
92, 106, 116, 128, 155, 158, 163,
194, 236, 241, 275, 299, 312, 315,

322, 331, 360
 formation of the LUDF and its
 development into ULIMO 122–124
 diamond 22–23, 28, 74–75,
 115–116, 123, 129, 182–183, 186,
 194, 205, 249, 324, 338
 direct superiors 231, 329
 disarmament, demobilisation
 and reintegration (DDR) 37–38,
 311, 317–319, 329, 337, 339
 discipline 5, 7–8, 185, 194, 233,
 311–312
 disorder 72, 120, 347
 dissolution 65, 191, 199–200,
 237
 armed conflict and the 61–62
 Doctors without Borders 200,
 303
 Donso 45, 288
 Duai, Mohammed 147, 317,
 329
 Dumbuya, M.S. 213–214, 248,
 260, 264, 273, 287, 289, 291

E

Eastern Region Defence
 Committee (EREDCOM)
 first vigilante group in the
 Mende land 133–135
 Economic Community of West
 African States Monitoring Group

(ECOMOG) 35–37, 120–121, 192,
 200, 204, 224, 226, 230, 236–237,
 239–241, 244–245, 247, 249–250,
 252, 275–278, 291, 296–297, 299,
 301–304, 307–312, 330, 336, 339,
 342, 346–348, 351
 Samuel Hinga Norman and
 215–220
 Kamajors/ECOMOG
 offensive and the
 restoration of the Kabbah
 Administration 260–273
 liberation of Freetown by 263–
 266
 and the Monrovia
 Underground 210–220
 support from 207–210
 Economic Community of West
 African States (ECOWAS) 35, 199,
 207, 277, 310
 educated class 115, 117
 emergence 110, 239, 346
 of a formalised pattern of
 mobilisation 173–176
 of new initiators 172–173
 role of the hunter Kamajors
 38–41
 increase of Kamajors and the
 173–177
 of small networks 137–158
 ethnic groups 2, 17–18, 23–25,

35, 40, 44–45, 51, 62, 83, 105, 130,
132, 172, 273, 289, 291–292, 363
of Sierra Leone 14–15
ethnicity 6, 58, 130, 288, 292
ethnography 6–7, 367
of human networks 352–353
Executive Outcomes (EO) 32–
33
expedition
Saddam Sheriff's 164–166, 336–
337, 342–343
explanatory model 5, 65–67
exploitation 77, 107–108

F

faction 4, 6, 17, 23, 37, 72, 76,
82, 91, 93, 122–124, 221, 317–320,
357, 361
faith 166, 202, 253, 353
indigenous Mende 108–109
Islamic intellectual 110–114
Fefegura, Joseph 283, 301–305
female combatants 131
fieldwork 6, 9, 16–18, 70, 75,
81, 85–90, 125, 133, 160, 167, 178,
184, 187, 354, 359. 363–364
financial incentives 101, 107
firefight 29, 37
First Liberian Civil War 28, 91,
120–121, 123, 135, 182, 199, 207,
211, 215, 217–218, 229, 240, 354,

361
Fofana, Moinina 78, 80, 94,
243, 246, 253–255, 257, 273, 280,
282, 297, 330, 335, 338–339, 347,
360–361
formality
initiations become a 178–180
Fortune, Mama Munda 170
Fourah Bay College 27, 133,
212
framework 6, 96, 101, 111, 351,
362
constructing a hypothesis and
establishing an analytical 53–84
Freetown 11–14, 16, 20–21, 27,
29–30, 32, 34–37, 83, 90–91, 97,
116, 131, 141, 147, 150, 169, 191,
197–198, 200, 204–205, 207–208,
214, 223, 243–244, 246–247, 261–
262, 266–269, 273, 275–278, 283,
292, 295–296, 298–315, 319, 322,
331, 334–340, 343, 351
Kamajors who went to 271–
273
liberation by ECOMOG forces
263–266
Frontier-Police Force 99
Fullah 15, 132

G
Gallinas 15

garri 218, 225
 garrison 196, 247, 292, 301,
 303, 307–308, 322, 342–343
 Gbandawo Forest 183–184
 Gbenthi 287
 Gbujama, Shirley 298
 Gendema 239, 249–250, 252–
 255, 266–270, 273, 282–283, 286–
 288, 290, 303, 312, 329, 338–339,
 342–343, 346–349, 351, 359, 363
 Ibrahim Tucker 335–337
 Kamajor leadership 206–207
 Kamajors left behind 248–249
 military activity in 220–227
 organisation of the Kamajors
 234–235
 rise of a dominant PC network
 191–237
 Samuel Hinga Norman leaves
 240–249
 genii 109, 114
 geographical features 19
 making use of 137–140
 Ghana 35, 207, 309, 339
 Gola 15, 40
 Gondama 160–161, 165, 341–
 342
 guerrilla
 making use of geographical
 features 137–140
 RUF's 137–143, 350

strategy 137–140
 tactics 30, 82, 137, 157, 283
 warfare 82, 119, 131, 157, 161,
 283
 Guinea 11, 29, 34–35, 41, 82,
 120–123, 160, 191, 198, 201, 207,
 211–214, 235, 245, 261, 276, 288,
 319–324, 338

H
 hale 108–110, 113–114, 326
 Hardin, Andrew 212, 248, 281–
 283, 302
 Hastings 264–265, 271–272,
 307
 headman/headmen 96, 100,
 106
 headquarters 133, 146, 183,
 197, 208, 218, 236, 248–249, 252,
 261, 266, 276–277, 289–290, 309,
 342
 herbalist 41–42, 108–110, 114,
 151, 154, 164, 170, 172, 330, 353
 hierarchy 96, 186, 192, 206,
 232, 241, 327
 High Priest of the Kamajors
 253
 Hindowa, Kosseh 286
 hinterland 18, 83, 98–107, 159,
 192, 263–266, 310
 Kamajors take up arms in the

266–270

- historical background 14, 95–118
- history 39, 43, 85, 88, 92, 97, 133, 308, 363, 365, 367
 - of Sierra Leone 11–14
 - people who lived through the civil war 333–344
- Hotel Africa 215–216
- human networks 2, 5–7, 45, 47, 51, 55, 59–60, 65–66, 73, 80, 122
 - an ethnography of 352–353
 - armed groups as 345–365
 - human rights violations 92, 139–140, 142–143, 176, 214, 239, 253, 339
 - humanitarian law 46, 78, 92–94
- Humui 41
- hunter Kamajor 24–26, 31, 42, 51, 130, 133–134
 - role of in the emergence of the war Kamajors 38–41
 - similarities between the war Kamajors and 42–44
 - hunter militias 25–26, 31, 35–36, 40–41, 82–83, 134, 137, 155, 157–159, 163–166, 173, 188, 287, 289, 292, 331
 - background to the formation of 137–143
 - in Bonthe District and Allieu

Kondewa 150–153

- cooperation among 159–163
- in the early days of the war 143–144
 - expansion of 160–161
 - formation of 143–150
 - organisation of non-Kamajor groups 290–292
- Samuel Hinga Norman and 161–163
 - hypothesis 6, 158, 189, 237, 331
 - of this book 69
 - constructing a 53–84
 - premise for 74–76
 - of this study 70
 - verifying 77–81, 345–350

I

- independence 11–12, 14, 27, 54, 56, 64, 74, 101–108, 144, 375
 - outline of the chieftaincy system in Sierra Leone after 95–96
 - influence 14, 27, 59, 68, 70, 98–99, 104, 110, 112–113, 150, 169, 192, 252, 254, 278, 280–281, 297, 299, 317, 327, 329, 331, 353, 361, 363
 - increasing 176–177
 - initiators lose their 324–327
 - initiation 25–26, 31, 41–42, 47, 82, 108, 114, 130, 134, 147, 157,

159, 173–174, 176–177, 188, 205–206, 220, 226, 242–243, 247, 250, 280, 288, 311, 325–327, 336, 342
 formality 178–180
 origin of initiation rites in the Bonthe area 150–157
 Saddam Sheriff and the beginning of 153–155
 Samuel Hinga Norman and the spread of 166–169
 spread of 163–173
 wing 289–290
 initiator 41–42, 78, 81, 108, 110, 114, 150–151, 155, 157–159, 173–176, 183, 185, 187–189, 206–207, 220, 240, 242–243, 245, 253, 255, 258, 288–290, 294, 336, 338, 342, 346–347
 emergence of new 172–173
 establishment of combat units led by 177–180
 lose their influence as patrons 324–327
 spread of initiations and proliferation of 163–173
 spread of initiators from Kale Village 169–172
 units under the control of 177–178
 internal enemies 259, 300, 351
 internally displaced persons

(IDP) 159, 162, 165, 173, 188
 expansion of hunter militias via mobilisation in IDP camps 160–161
 International Crisis Group (ICG) 319–320, 327
 international humanitarian law 46, 78, 92–94
 interpersonal network
 not a group 46–47
 interpersonal relation(ship) 2, 5, 7, 9, 45, 47, 58, 66–69, 72–74, 77, 80, 333, 345, 350, 352, 354
 interview methodology 85–87
 Islam 14, 41–42, 81, 102, 108
 Islamic intellectuals 114, 154, 157, 164–165, 172, 212, 255, 282, 341, 353
 Islamic intellectuals within the Mende faith system 110–114
 issues 7, 81, 95, 100, 193–194, 240, 254, 367
 ethical 363–364
 locating 1–2
 potential 360–361

J

Jalloh, Ibrahim 127, 229–230, 232, 236, 320, 348–349
 Jamaica 13, 357
 Jambawai, George 251
 January 6 (January-Six) 343

invasion 306–312, 320, 340
Jawara 282
Jibeo, Doctor 164, 167, 298
Joru 268, 286
Jui 271–272, 310, 343
Junisa, Musa 253
Junta 30, 34, 65, 82, 200–204,
208, 214, 217, 221, 224, 226, 230,
236–237, 242, 248, 258–259, 266–
267, 269–270, 273, 290, 307, 315,
343, 346
Justice Coalition of Liberia
(JCL) 319, 321

K

Kabala 131–132, 272
Kabbah, Ahmed Tejan 1, 33–
35, 78, 82–83, 105, 108, 193–194,
197, 202–204, 207, 213–214, 229,
231, 248, 339, 346–347, 349
 exile of 197–199
 government in exile 34, 191,
198, 201–202, 211, 213, 218, 245,
343
Kabbah administration 108,
191–193, 196, 199–200, 251, 340
 first 33–34, 44, 47–48, 82, 346
 major battles during 306–316
 restoration of 83, 260–273,
276–278
 second 35–38, 48, 83, 275–331

unification of multiple PC
networks 159–189
 Kabbah, Sheik Mohammed
Abdullahaman 172, 179
 Kai, B.A. Foday 256
 Kailahun 19, 21, 91, 121, 129,
131–133, 140, 144, 161, 173, 182,
187, 204–205, 269–271, 288, 337,
339–340, 343
 District War Effort 144
 Kale 151–153, 155–158, 163–
165, 167, 172–173, 177–178, 188,
206, 242, 290, 335–338, 342–343
 Saddam Sheriff and the
beginning of initiation rites in 153–
155
 spread of initiators from 169–
172
 Kallon, M.S. 214, 218, 254, 259,
283
 Kamara, Abu Bakar 165–166,
316, 340–344
 Kamara, Jaiah 243, 252
 Kambo, Lieutenant Samuel
Komba 130, 132–133
 Kanneh 229
 Kapra 45, 291
 Kaprah 287
 Karamoko 113–114, 164, 341
 Karpeh, General Albert 122–
123

- Kassela War Council 177
- Keita, Marie 132
- Kenema 19–20, 31, 122–123, 125–126, 133–134, 137, 140–141, 143, 146–147, 157, 161, 163, 166–169, 171–173, 176, 182–187, 194–195, 205–206, 217, 220–222, 227, 253, 262, 266, 268–269, 286, 288–289, 300, 303, 310, 324, 326, 342–343
- Kessebeh, Sorie 100
- key sources 92–94
- Khobe, Maxwell Mitikishe 277–278, 304, 312–314, 320, 322–323
- Kissi 15, 49, 133
- Kofi 229
- Koinadugu 130–132, 287, 291
- Koindu 269
- Kondewa, Allieu 78–79, 94, 154–155, 158, 164, 167, 169–172, 240, 242–243, 245, 247, 253–255, 258, 260, 273, 289, 298, 317, 325, 327, 330–331, 338, 342, 347, 360–361
- hunter militia in Bonthe District and 150–153
- Kono 14, 45, 49, 105, 131–133, 173, 195, 288, 324, 338
- Koribondo 256, 266, 286
- Ahmed Koroma 283
- Koroma, Arthur 286
- Koroma, Joseph 281
- Koroma, Major Johnny Paul 34, 191, 197–199
- Koroma, Mohamed Bhonie 217
- Kpa 41, 99
- Krim 15, 151, 153–156
- Krim Civil Defence Unit 144
- Krio 13–14, 24, 49, 86, 98–100, 102, 104, 115, 276, 292, 323
- and English in Sierra Leone 15–17
- Kroo 15
- Kuranko 14, 45, 130, 132, 172, 291
- L**
- Lavalie, Alpha 133–134
- leadership structure 231, 328
- Lebanese 38, 74, 115–116, 326
- legislative council 102, 104, 374
- liberation
- of Freetown by ECOMOG Forces 263–266
- Liberia 11, 17, 28–29, 34–35, 40–41, 53, 65, 82–83, 85–86, 90–92, 94, 119–127, 135, 140, 145, 181–182, 203, 208–215, 217–220, 222–224, 226, 228–231, 233, 236, 239–241, 244, 247–249, 252, 268–271, 277, 281–283, 287, 298–299, 303,

318, 334, 348, 352, 361–362
 flow of combatants into 319–323
 Liberian border 30, 40, 124–125, 127, 138, 191–192, 212, 220, 222, 236, 240, 269, 300, 346
 Kamajors gather on 203–210
 Liberian Civil War
 first 28, 91, 120–121, 123, 135, 182, 199, 207, 211, 215, 217–218, 229, 240, 250, 354, 361
 second 91, 216, 319, 361
 Liberian Islamic Coalition for Rural Development 212
 Liberian refugees 29, 119, 121, 135, 228, 270
 mobilisation of 122–127
 Liberian United Defence Force (LUDF) 121–122, 125–127, 212, 228–229, 237
 formation of and its development into ULIMO 122–124
 Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) 91, 319–324, 329, 352
 life histories 84, 354
 of three individuals 335–337
 of Three Kamajors 333–344
 Limba 14, 49, 105, 132, 172, 213, 273

literature 4, 42, 44, 53, 74, 84–85, 89, 150, 363
 previous on States and armed conflicts in Africa 53–69
 logistical support 186, 230, 232, 254, 273, 281, 290, 310
 Loko 15, 49
 Lome 310, 313
 Lome Peace Accord 37, 92
 looted goods 152, 178
 looting 143, 157, 187–188, 194, 198, 214, 256, 263, 350
 by SLA soldiers 141–143
 Lotifunk 100
 Loyalty 46–47, 55–56, 58, 75, 185, 231, 318, 334
 Lumeh, Francis Mustapha 212, 215, 219, 248, 252, 260, 280–282, 298
 Lungi International Airport 198, 200, 261, 263–264, 276–277, 298–299, 307

M

Maada Gleh, Mohammed 350
 one of Sparrow's aides-de-camp 305–306
 Maggi 22, 196
 magical aspect
 of the Kamajors 108–114
 Makeni 20, 141, 272

Mali 111, 309	Kamajors Immediately after
Malu, Victor 208	199–200
Mandé 110, 112–113	Mechanism 4, 54, 58, 61, 352
Mandingo 15, 49, 113, 132	Médecins Sans Frontières 200
Mano Junction 134	Mende faith
Margai, Charles 258	indigenous faith 108–109
Margai, Sir Albert 104	Islamic Intellectuals within
Margai, Sir Milton 103–104	110–114
Maroons 13	Mende land 1, 23, 31, 40, 42,
Masiaka 195, 272, 300, 315	48, 82, 101–102, 105, 113, 135,
Masqita 307	139–142, 150, 157, 159–161, 164,
mass initiations 178–179, 325	169, 171, 173, 176, 188, 251, 287,
Massacre of Telu 148–150	289, 300
Massallay, Eddie 181–182, 185,	First Vigilante Group in 133–
203–210, 212, 215, 217, 231, 241,	135
249, 286–287, 299, 301, 303–304,	Mende People and 17–19
308, 346	in the Precolonial Era 97–100
Massallay, Kamoh Mohammed	spread of the Kamajors 163–
Doctor 152, 164, 167, 170–172,	164
220, 243, 290, 298	meritocracy 241, 358–359
Mauritania 172	military operations 157, 187–
May 2000 37, 306, 313, 317,	188, 199, 208, 254, 259, 285, 300,
326, 343	311, 314, 320, 324
Incident 313–316	CDF 295–296
May 25 coup (May Twenty	military personnel 17, 232
Five) 34, 82, 191–192, 203, 207,	military restructuring 241
210, 214, 217, 221, 236–237, 240,	based in the Abidjan Peace
242–243, 246, 250, 253, 283, 286,	Accord 193
336, 338, 343	military skills 228
circumstances that led to 192–	military tactics 228
202	military training 27–28, 120,

122, 124, 126, 128, 146–147, 226,
228, 233, 250, 264, 312, 328, 334
military wing 212, 232, 280,
285, 289–290, 325
militia 6, 9–10, 23, 25–26, 31,
35–36, 38, 40–41, 43–44, 48, 82–83,
106, 131, 134, 137, 150, 155, 157–
159, 163–167, 172–173, 186, 188,
193, 200, 202, 205, 212, 223, 240,
287, 289, 292, 320, 328, 331, 337
background to the formation
of 137–143
in Bonthe District and Allieu
Kondewa 151–153
cooperation among 159–163
in the early days of the war
143–144
ethnic origin of Kamajor 49
expansion of 160–161
formation of hunter 143–150
organisation of non-Kamajor
290–292
Samuel Hinga Norman and
162–163
who mobilised 50
mining 37, 116, 183, 186, 194,
324
mobilisation 51, 68, 119, 135,
144, 162, 165, 179, 349, 361
emergence of a formalised
pattern of Kamajor 173–176

increase of Kamajors and the
emergence of a formalised pattern
of 173–177
in IDP camps 160–161
of irregular troops as personal
clients of commanders 128–129
of Liberian refugees 122–127
of local residents by the Sierra
Leonean Army 128–135
mobilising the Kamajors 95–
108
modernity of witchcraft
reconsidered 353–353
Mokanji 195–196
Momoh, President Joseph
Saidu 29, 116, 258
administration 28–29, 81–82,
119–135
Moniwo, Charles 280–281, 283,
298
Monrovia 90–91, 122, 125–126,
207, 208, 210–213, 215, 217–219,
223, 229–230, 235, 247, 249, 252,
296, 301, 320, 341, 354
Monrovia Underground 248
ECOMOG and 210–220
Movement for the Restoration
of Democracy 210–215
morimen 114, 164
Morocco 172
Mosquito 223, 307

Movement for the Restoration
of Democracy (MRD) 210–214

Moyamba 19, 140, 161–162,
195, 200, 205, 246, 250, 257–258,
266, 286, 326, 338

Muniro, Kamoh 220, 294–295

N

Nabieu, Ambrose 284

Nallo, Albert 245, 251, 256–
257, 260, 296–297

one of commanders in Base
Zero Kamajor 337–340

national border 83, 98, 192,
352, 361

National Coordinating
Committee (NCC) 311–313, 338

National Patriotic Front of
Liberia (NPFL) 28, 120, 123–126,
218, 240, 271, 319

National Provisional Ruling
Council (NPRC) 30, 82, 291
administration 29–33, 82, 119–
135, 137–158, 159–189

National Union of Sierra
Leone Students 298
neopatrimonial state 55, 57–61,
64, 76, 355

neopatrimonialism 53, 76

in African States 55–58

to patron–client networks 58–

61

networks 2, 5–7, 9, 45, 47, 51,
53, 55, 65–74, 77–78, 81–84, 111,
122, 333, 335, 344, 350–353, 355

armed groups as 345–365

armed conflict and the
dissolution of PC 61–62

CDF-wide 78–80

centred on Sparrow 348–350

continuation of 76–77

emergence of small 137–158

establishment and dismantling
275–331

elimination of 316–330

function of 334–335

how individual commanders

built their own 80–81

impetus for dissolving PC

networks headed by a ruler 62–65

interpersonal 46–47

from neopatrimonialism to

patron–client networks 58–61

replacing the dominant 239–

274

rise of a dominant 191–237

unification of multiple PC

networks 159–189

units under the control of

initiators 177–178

ngafa 109

Ngawujia, Augustine 286

Ngewo 109

Nigeria 7, 14, 29, 34–36, 98, 121, 160, 198–199, 204, 207–208, 218, 222, 236, 244, 249, 252, 263, 272, 276–277, 295–296, 306, 309–310, 314, 320, 324

Njaye 41

No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) 93

Norman, Samuel Hinga 33–34, 44, 78–79, 94, 148, 150, 157, 166, 183, 186, 192–194, 205, 210–215, 223, 228, 231, 235–237, 239, 249–250, 252–264, 273, 278, 281–291, 295–296, 298–305, 308, 311–313, 317, 323, 326, 330–331, 336, 340, 342, 345–351, 354, 360

activities 296–297

and ECOMOG 215–220

and the hunter militias 162–163

and the Kamajors 201–202

leaves the Gendema Kamajors 240–249

loses his power 327–330

rise of 144–147

and the spread of initiations 166–169

support from ECOMOG and the invitation to 207–210

why did Norman move 240–242

NPRC administration 29–33, 82, 119–135, 137–189

Nyuma, Tom 133

O

Operation Black December 260–263, 277

Operation No Living Things 36

Operation Sandstorm 263

Operation Tigerhead 263

oral sources 87–90

organisation

of the Gendema Kamajors 234–235

of non-Kamajor hunter militia groups 290–292

organisational structure 72–73, 269, 287

of Base Zero 253–260

of the CDF according to the Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone Report 278–279

of the CDF Special Forces 231–234

of the Kamajors 156–157

Organization of African Unity (OAU) 199, 215–216

Villas 215–218

Organized Body of Hunting Societies (OBHS) 292

Orinco, Mohammed Musa 252,

281

overview 28, 51, 81, 119, 275
of the Kamajors/CDF 345–

347

P

Pademba Road Prison 197, 307

Panguma 253, 286

paramilitary organisation 122,
275

paramount chief 43, 69, 96–
108, 130–131, 133, 143–144, 146–
147, 158–159, 162–163, 167, 173–
177, 180–181, 189, 245, 247–248,
250, 254, 259–260, 335, 345–346,
355

patrimonial state 55–59, 74

patron 46–47, 51, 65, 68, 72–
77, 81, 101, 103, 115, 117, 129, 186,
192, 220, 231, 234, 237, 253, 271,
273, 305–306, 311, 313, 318, 331,
334, 345, 348–354, 360–361

initiators lose their influence as
324–327

patron–client network (PC
network) 53, 59–60, 66–73, 77–78,
81–84, 101, 103, 107, 115, 117, 137,
158, 333–335, 337, 340, 348, 350–
352

armed conflict and the
dissolution of 61–62

CDF-wide 78–80

centred on Sparrow 348–350

continuation of during the

Sierra Leone Civil War 76–77

elimination of 316–330

establishment and dismantling

of 275–331

function of from the

perspective of the CDF Special
Forces 334–335

how individual commanders

built their own 80–81

impetus for dissolving 62–65

from neopatrimonialism to 58–

61

new 177–178

replacing the dominant 239–

274

rise of a dominant 191–237

unification of multiple 159–189

units under the control of

initiators

patron–client relationship 46,

51, 59–60, 62, 67, 69, 74–77, 231,

234, 253

pattern 159, 179

increase of Kamajors and

the emergence of a

formalised 173–177

peace building 4, 317, 331

peacekeepers 275, 279, 296

personnel 17, 34, 37, 77, 81,
 120, 161, 164, 193, 212, 218, 228,
 232, 234, 237, 250, 252, 271–273,
 277, 281–285, 338, 342, 345, 349,
 364
 Peugeot Garage 211, 236
 political elite 54, 58, 60–62, 64–
 66, 72, 76–77, 92, 319, 350–351,
 355
 political science 53–54
 bridging the gap between
 anthropology and 7–9
 contribution to African conflict
 studies in 350–352
 examining the civil war from
 the perspectives of 5–10
 studies of African conflicts
 based on political science 5–6
 population 1, 12, 14, 17, 20, 48,
 102–104, 106, 115, 265, 307, 323,
 326
 Poro 41–42, 129
 Potoru 127
 power struggle 72, 76, 81, 276,
 350
 CDF internal 297–306
 Presidency 33, 116, 240, 276
 press release 198, 204, 212–213,
 223
 primary school 16, 101–102
 propaganda 202, 214, 231, 290–

291
 protectorate 14, 95, 97, 100–
 102, 104, 107, 115
 Pujehun 19, 127, 140, 144,
 153–154, 161–162, 165, 171–172,
 176, 181–182, 203–206, 223, 286–
 287, 294, 300–301, 303–304, 308,
 338, 341–343, 351–352

Q

quantitative research
 characteristics of the CDF as
 seen through 47–51

R

rebel 77, 125, 127, 153, 196,
 198, 218, 220, 240, 257, 270–271,
 296, 309, 335
 attack 139, 146, 167, 242
 rebellion 26, 28–29, 117, 122,
 137, 218, 290, 319, 322, 361
 Sierra Leone government's
 response to 119–121
 recaptives 13–14, 16
 recruits 77, 128, 160, 163, 325–
 326
 refugee 29, 87–88, 119, 121,
 135, 160–161, 198, 208, 210, 212,
 228, 270, 288, 341–342
 mobilisation of Liberian 122–
 127

regent chiefs 106, 144–146,
 150, 157, 167, 256, 356
 relief supplies 215, 244, 249
 Republic of Sierra Leone
 Armed Forces (RSLAF) 27
 research 2–9, 46, 53–55, 58, 67,
 81, 105–106, 112, 147, 181, 188,
 202, 207, 211, 220, 231, 278–280,
 291, 293, 295–296, 314, 319–320,
 323, 327, 333, 352, 354, 360, 362–
 363
 characteristics of the CDF as
 seen through quantitative 47–51
 collaborator 90–92, 192, 209–
 211, 228, 241
 contribution to 355–360
 future goals 361–362
 methods 85–94
 restructuring 193, 241, 275,
 290, 327
 military 193
 Revolutionary United Front
 (RUF) 1–4, 23, 28–38, 40, 45, 49,
 51, 76–78, 82–83, 92, 94, 106, 108,
 117, 119–121, 123–128, 132–133,
 135, 137, 143, 146–148, 152–153,
 155–158, 160–161, 163, 167, 182–
 187, 191–193, 197–200, 202–205,
 208, 218–219, 221–223, 225–227,
 240, 242, 258, 261, 263–265, 268–
 272, 275, 277–278, 288, 292, 300,

306–307, 309–311, 313–317, 320,
 322, 324, 330–331, 335, 337, 341–
 342, 350, 355–360
 formation of 27–28
 guerrilla strategy 137–143
 guerrilla strategy and ‘sobel’
 137–140
 rhizome states 67, 355
 rice allowance 193, 301
 Ricks Institute 216, 218–219,
 236, 249, 252
 Rogers, Alhaji Daramy 251,
 259–260
 role of the hunter Kamajors in
 the emergence of the war Kamajors
 38–41
 ronko 44, 183
 royal family 96, 107–108, 228
 ruling house 96, 107
 Rwanda 53, 330

S

safety net 75–76
 salt 22, 110, 196
 Samai, Kandeh G. 288
 Sande 41
 Sankoh, Alfred Foday Saybana
 27–28, 36–38, 120, 184, 198, 306–
 307, 310–313, 317
 Sankoh, Mustapha 282
 Sankoh, Tejan 214, 260, 286,

- 299
- sebeh* 44
- second Liberian civil war 91,
- 216, 319, 361
- section chief 96, 100, 106, 130–131, 146, 173, 186–187
- Sesay, Alie 220
- Sesay, Aliu 167
- Sesay, Issa 38, 317
- Sesay, Mohammed 283
- Sesay, Nyamakoro 287, 291
- Sesay, Sheik A.T. 287
- settlers 12–14, 16
- Sherbro 15, 18–19, 49, 372
- Sheriff, Moalem Shuahibu 171, 206–208, 220
- Sheriff, Saddam 164, 167–169, 171, 177, 185, 187–188, 206–207, 337–338, 342
- and the beginning of initiation rites in Kale Village 153–155
- expedition 164–166, 336, 343
- shrine 42, 155, 164–166, 169–173, 187, 206, 220, 342
- Sierra Leone Army (SLA) 23, 29, 31–35, 38, 82, 92, 119–128, 135–137, 143–147, 155, 181–183, 187–188, 193, 198, 200–206, 214, 242, 264, 268, 270, 272, 277, 284, 309, 312–322, 330, 335–337, 341–343
- clashes between the Kamajors and 193–197
- looting by 141–143
- mobilisation of local residents by 128–135
- Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) 27, 197
- Sierra Leone Company 13
- Sierra Leone government 6, 36, 119, 122–123, 135, 298, 312, 351
- response to the rebellion 119–121
- Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) 33, 101, 103, 108, 133, 145, 211, 244, 283
- traditional authority and the rise of 101–105
- Sierra Leone police 120, 131, 214
- similarities between the war Kamajors and hunter Kamajors 42–44
- slave trade 12, 111–112
- slavery 12, 111
- slaves 11–16, 111–112
- sobel 32, 157
- guerrilla strategy and 137–143
- social position 47, 59, 132, 228
- Songhai Empire 111
- Sparrow 81, 84–85, 125–127, 153, 192, 209–215, 218, 237, 241–

242, 249, 276, 281–283, 313–316,
 320–322, 328–329, 331, 333–334,
 337, 340–341, 343, 351–352, 354,
 359, 365
 aides-de-camp 305–306
 and the Brookfields Hotel 311–
 313
 capture 235–236
 and the CDF Special Forces
 227–236
 experiences 297–306
 gets shot 301–305
 PC network centred on 348–
 350
 release 297–301
 research collaborator 90–92
 Speaker 96, 145, 204, 277, 330,
 335
 Special Court for Sierra Leone
 (SCSL) 46, 78, 125, 144–146, 150,
 157–158, 160, 162–163, 166–169,
 217, 219, 329–330, 335, 337, 339,
 347, 360, 365
 transcripts of 94
 Special Forces 192, 235–237,
 269, 273–274, 300–301, 303–306,
 311, 320–323, 333, 337, 340, 343–
 345, 348–349, 352, 354
 change in Kamajor unit
 composition from the perspective
 of the CDF 270–271

function of PC networks from
 the perspective of the CDF 334–
 335
 organisational structure of the
 CDF 231–234
 Sparrow and the CDF 227–236
 Special Security Division (SSD)
 120, 214
 Special Security Service (SSS)
 182
 state
 matter for discussion 53
 neopatrimonialism in African
 55–58
 Stevens, Siaka Probyn 29, 74,
 104–105, 115–116, 145
 Strasser, Captain Valentine
 Esegargbo Melvine 30, 32–33, 138,
 169
 structural adjustment
 programme (SAP) 64, 116
 student movement 26–28, 76
 subjective reality 87–88
 supernatural powers 41–42, 44,
 166, 183, 353
 supply chain 261, 288–289
 Susu 15, 49, 113, 286
 Swaray, John 207–208

T

Takeuchi's Theory

problems with 65–67
 Talia 83, 244, 248–253, 282,
 338
 move from Tihun to 245–248
 Tamaboro 45, 133, 135, 287,
 291
 first ethnic-based vigilante
 group 130–132
 Taoma 122–124
 taxes
 Taylor, Charles
 Tegloma Federation
 International
 Telu 145 162, 219, 256, 342
 massacre of 148–150
 Temne 12, 14, 45, 105, 172,
 176, 195, 291
 Territorial Defence Force
 (TDF) 146, 327–328
 Tihun 169–171, 240, 242–244,
 290, 342
 move from 245–248
 Togo 310
 tourism 6, 298
 town chiefs 96, 130, 173, 186–
 187
 trade routes 98–100, 111
 traditional authority 144–146,
 160, 181, 187, 356
 and the rise of the SLPP 101–
 105

tyrannical nature of 105–107
 transcripts of the Special Court
 for Sierra Leone 94
 transformation 2, 6, 24, 26, 37,
 67, 70, 74, 78, 80–85, 88–89, 94,
 111, 192, 270, 333, 334, 345–346,
 350, 352, 360
 Tribal Authorities Ordinance,
 No. 8 of 1937 96–97
 tribalism 176, 213
 Truth and Reconciliation
 Commission 140, 151, 153, 196,
 201, 203, 205, 210–211, 213, 236,
 261–262, 264, 308, 310, 324
 Witness to Truth: Report of
 the Sierra Leone Truth and
 Reconciliation Commission 92
 Tucker, Ibrahim 206–208, 226,
 234–235, 242, 248, 254, 267–269,
 287, 303, 329, 342–343, 359
 leader of the Gendema
 Kamajors 335–337

U

 underground organisation 210,
 212–213, 252, 281–282
 United Liberation Movement
 of Liberia for Democracy
 (ULIMO) 135, 228–230, 232, 348
 formation of the LUDF and its
 development into ULIMO 122–124

Sierra Leoneans who joined the
ULIMO 124–127

United Mineworkers' Union
104

United Nations Mission in
Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) 37–38,
311, 313, 317, 395

University of Sierra Leone 27,
212, 214

V

Vai 15, 181–182
vigilante 1–2, 23, 25–26, 31, 45,
47–49, 51, 69–71, 143, 146, 153,
159, 194, 275, 290, 292, 335, 371

Eastern Region Defence
Committee 133–135
Tamaboro: the first ethnic-
based group 130–132
violence 3, 58, 72, 176–177,
194, 198, 329, 356–358, 364
volunteer 154, 183, 185, 217,
234
Kamajor group that expanded
by appealing for 181–185

W

War Council 177, 186, 259–260
war Kamajor 1, 26, 31, 38, 44,

133–134, 158, 350
emergence of the war

Kamajors 38–41
similarities 42–44
as a society 41–42
Waterloo 20, 307, 315
Wilberforce Barracks 309
Wireless 226–227, 284, 301,
317

witch doctor 41, 81, 172
witchcraft 110, 172
modernity of 353–354
Witness to Truth: Report of
the Sierra Leone Truth and
Reconciliation Commission 92

Y

Yalunka 15, 49, 132
yes men 215, 351
Yoko, Madam 99

Z

Zimmi 123, 203, 206, 220–221,
223–224, 227, 231, 268–269, 286,
300–306, 312, 336–337
Zino 184–185
Zogoda 33, 183–184, 193, 205,
342

Sierra Leone experienced 11 years' civil war after the incursion of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) from adjacent Liberia. The war of Sierra Leone is one of the most researched in Africa. However, the foci of studies are mostly on the RUF. Other armed groups are not sufficiently studied. This book focuses on the governmental side of the Kamajor and the Civil Defence Force (CDF). Kamajors were community-based vigilantes mobilised by paramount chiefs in various Mende communities. During the course of the war, the government organised Kamajors into a pro-governmental militia, the CDF. This book examines how human networks worked in the course of the formation of Kamajor and of the CDF. Even though the roles of human networks have been discussed in the realm of African politics, they have been left hypothetical. Few studies demonstrate the whole picture on how neopatrimonialism, patron–client relations or informal networks function within an organisation. This book describes the course of Kamajor/CDF along with functions of the human networks. In the networks, the threads of human relations are interwoven by subsuming the local, the international and the global dimensions of the armed conflict. Some connect to governmental figures. Others have transnational networks in adjacent Liberia. In the changing situations of the war, some of the relations are maintained, while some relations are disintegrated. Those who emerge as prominent figures in the Kamajor/CDF use their own human networks to obtain resources for the Kamajor/CDF, which in turn, afford themselves higher positions in the force.

★ ★ ★

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